4. 46. 44

The Reaſoning of Chriſt *and his* Apoſtles *in their Defence of* Chriſtianity *conſider'd*

IN SEVEN

SERMONS

Preached at

Hackney in *Middleſex*,

IN THE

Months of *November* and *December*, 1724.

To which is Prefixed,

A PREFACE taking Notice of the falſe Repreſentations of Chriſtianity and of the Apoſtles Reaſoning in Defence of it, in a Book entitled, *The Grounds and Reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion.*

To which is now added, the ſecond Edition of,

The GOSPEL, a Reinforcement of the *Law* of *Nature*. A SERMON preached at *Hackney*, *November* 24. 1728. With a PREFACE ſhewing, That the GOSPEL is not an *arbitrary* or *unneceſſary* Inſtitution. In Anſwer to a Book intitled, *Chriſtianity as old as the Creation.*

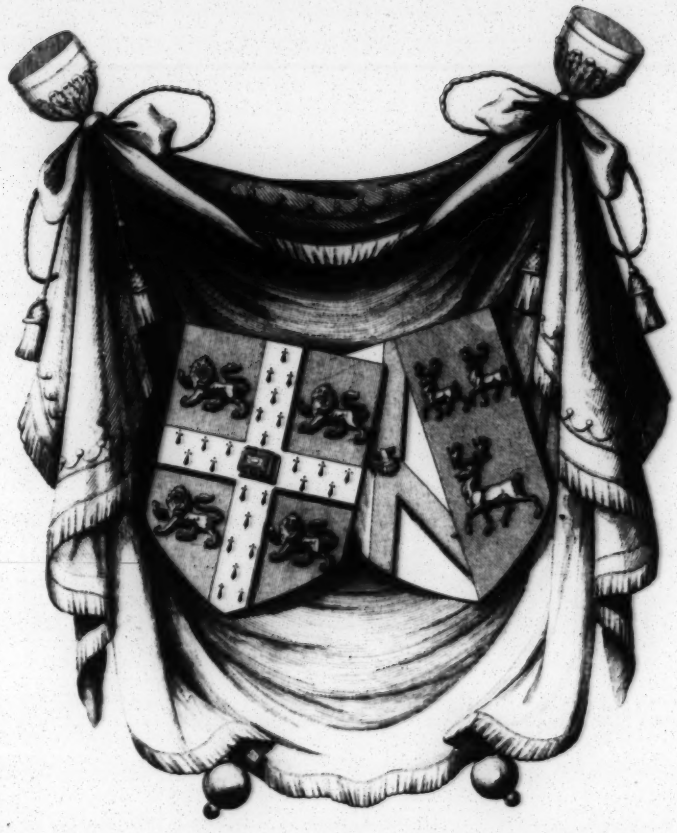
By *THOMAS BULLOCK*, M.A.
And Chaplain to the Rt. Rev. the Lord Biſhop of *Norwich.*

Publiſhed at the Requeſt of the Gentlemen of Hackney.

The FOURTH EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed, and ſold by THOMAS and FRANCIS MIDWINTER, at the *Three Crowns* in *St. Paul's* Church-Yard, 1735.



Academiæ Cantabrigiensis
Liber.

2502.04

PREFACE.

THE importunity of Friends could hardly have prevailed with me to publiſh the following Sermons, upon a Subject ſo fully handled by a learned Prelate of our Church; if I had not been preſt with this plauſible reaſon, That a few plain Diſcourſes deſigned for a popular Audience might be of uſe to many, who may want capacity to digeſt an elaborate Performance, intended chiefly for the ſatisfaction of the learned World.

Chriſtianity is the common Concern of the unlearn'd, as well as of the learn'd. All men are required to receive it, and may therefore juſtly ask, What the obligation is and whence it ariſes? Indeed the influence of Education and Example prevails ſo much upon the buſy and unthinking part of mankind, that they ſeldom ſeek for reaſons to correct or to confirm the notions they have received. By this means, I believe, Chriſtianity is embraced by many, who would have been of another Perſwaſion, had they been born in another Climate. That there are many, who are willing to take it upon truſt, when it falls in their way, is no

advantage to true Religion: the Profeſſors it gains thereby are but Creatures of Chance, the Proſelytes it is deprived of thereby are innumerable.

One unhappy cauſe of this indolent dependance upon ſo precarious a bottom, is a notion, That the arguments proper to be conſidered and attended to, by one that would make a rational choice of his Religion, require more application and underſtanding than falls to the ſhare of the bulk of mankind. *This, I believe, is not true of Chriſtianity or the Arguments urged in defence of it. The Point, which ſeems to lie moſt out of the reach of ordinary Capacities, is the determination of this Queſtion,* Whether the Goſpel be a credible well-atteſted Hiſtory. *It is true, the unlearned Inquirer may not have leiſure or capacity to ſearch into other ancient writings and records of antiquity to ſatisfy himſelf, Whether the Goſpel-Hiſtory be of the ſame, or later date than is pretended; whether the Writers of it are any where recorded as men of ſuſpicious characters; or whether their Relation claſhes with any other credible Hiſtory of the ſame times. But to his great ſatisfaction he may obſerve, that this ſearch has been made for him, by Perſons wanting neither application, nor underſtanding, nor zeal to diſcover every the minuteſt flaw, that could be found in the Goſpel-Hiſtory; (I mean the adverſaries of Chriſtianity) who have not been able to fix any tolerable ſuſpicion of fraud or unfaithfulneſs thereupon: From whence he may rationally conclude, that this is liable to no juſt ſuſpicion: which, if it had would*

would long ago have been discovered by the indefatigable Patrons of infidelity.

I would therefore suppose a Person, altogether unskilled in records of Antiquity, reasoning with himself in this manner, " *Here is* " *a History before me of such a nature, that* " *every serious person at least must have thought* " *himself concerned to be resolved about the* " *truth or falshood of it; the Facts related* " *therein are of such a kind, as must have* " *raised the curiosity and attention of most* " *men; and then they are said to have been* " *done in such a publick open Manner, that* " *if they had been forged, it is impossible to* " *conceive, how the forgery should remain un-* " *detected. For if I would suppose them* " *forged, when shall I suppose the story to* " *have been first made publick? Could it* " *have been publisht with the least success,* " *within ten or twenty years after the facts in* " *question were pretended to be done? It is* " *impossible. For instance, if a Sect of men* " *should now arise, pretending they had been* " *followers of a famous Prophet, who a few* " *Years ago had made himself remarkable in* " London, *and other populous parts of* Eng- " land *for his Miracles; going up and down* " *thro' Cities and Villages for above three* " *Years together,* healing all manner of " sickness and all manner of diseases among " the people *with a touch, or with a word's* " *speaking; commanding* the blind to see; the " lame to walk; the deaf to hear; the " dumb to speak, and the dead to rise a- " gain: *till by such works as these* (*which*

" *he did in the moſt publick manner*) *his fame*
" *and his intereſt among the people grew to*
" *ſuch a degree, that the Government thought*
" *it neceſſary to put a ſtop to it by taking a-*
" *way his life; and to prevent any future*
" *ſham pretence of a Reſurrection, order'd a*
" *ſtrict guard to be kept at his grave; where*
" *notwithſtanding his Body did not remain*
" *after the third day; which put his Ene-*
" *mies to the poor ſhift of ſaying it was ſtol'n,*
" *whilſt the watch ſlept. If ſuch a ſtory*
" *ſhould be now forged, I cannot conceive how*
" *it ſhould meet with the leaſt credit, or have*
" *any influence upon the weakeſt Brain. Could*
" *the Authors of it find any encouragement to*
" *perſiſt in it? Would it not ſink under the*
" *weight of its own notorious falſhood? Or if*
" *it met with any credit, and a growing Sect*
" *began to be form'd thereupon, would not*
" *Hiſtory take notice of it, and effectually ex-*
" *poſe it to after-ages, as the moſt conſummate*
" *piece of impudence and forgery, that the*
" *world ever produced?——Undoubtedly.—*
" *Is then this the caſe with reſpect to the*
" *Goſpel Hiſtory? Are there any ancient Re-*
" *cords which repreſent it in this light?*
" *Though I have not leiſure or capacity to*
" *ſearch into this matter my ſelf; yet am I*
" *well aſſured there are none, becauſe the*
" *adverſaries of Chriſtianity, who want nei-*
" *ther skill nor application for the purpoſe,*
" *have made no ſuch diſcovery; and I can as*
" *ſafely depend upon their Silence, as upon my*
" *own Search in this matter. It could not*
" *therefore be forged within ten or twenty*

" *years*

" *years after the date of the Facts. Could it*
" *be done with more ſucceſs about a Century*
" *or two lower? The ſame reaſoning con-*
" *vinces me that 'tis impoſſible. For ſuppoſe it*
" *ſhould now be pretended, that in the Reign*
" *of King* James *the firſt, there appeared ſuch*
" *a Prophet, who lived, and died, and eſcaped*
" *the grave in the like remarkable manner;*
" *that from thenceforth his Diſciples pro-*
" *claim'd him living, went up and down mak-*
" *ing thouſands of Converts every where, till*
" *at laſt they ſealed their Teſtimony with their*
" *blood; that a growing Sect was form'd*
" *thereupon ſubſiſting to this very day. If ſuch*
" *a ſtory ſhould now be made publick, ſhould*
" *not I, or any other unskilful man, ſtand a-*
" *mazed at it, inſtead of giving it credit? We*
" *ſhould hardly think it worth while to ask,*
" who ever heard of it; or where are any
" footſteps of a Sect form'd thereupon?
" *But if it ſhould gain any credit, I cannot*
" *doubt but Hiſtory would ſufficiently expoſe it*
" *to Poſterity. That this has not been done*
" *with reſpect to Chriſtianity, I am ſatisfied*
" *from the ſilence of its faithful Adverſaries.*
" *And the ſame reaſons convince me, that the*
" *Goſpel Hiſtory could not be forged in any*
" *Age or Century later; that the Writers of*
" *it are not recorded as men of ſuſpicious cha-*
" *racters; and that their relation of Facts*
" *does not claſh with any other credible Hi-*
" *ſtory of the ſame times.*"

Thus the unlearned Inquirer, who has not much time for application, nor the advantages of learning to direct his ſearch among the

Records of Antiquity, may with a tolerable degree of common ſenſe come at a rational ſatisfaction about the Goſpel-Hiſtory; and may ſafely conclude, from the indefatigable, but unſucceſsful Pains of its Adverſaries, that a Hiſtory, which has been able to ſtand the teſt of the ſevereſt ſcrutiny, muſt be a very credible one, and may (if any elſe can) be ſafely relied upon. Being capable of ſatisfaction on this Head; other points in conteſt will lie more within the reach of ordinary Capacities: Eſpecially thoſe, which have been lately brought in queſtion by an Anonymous Author *in a Book intitled* the Grounds and Reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion. *Wherein he pretends from the Writings of the Apoſtles to undermine the Doctrine taught by them. But ſo unfair are his Citations, ſo groſs his Miſinterpretations of Scripture; aud commonly ſo poor his ſophiſtry, where he pretends to reaſon; that I can hardly doubt but the unlearned Reader, with his Bible before him, may be made ſenſible thereof.*

Chriſtianity, as he has painted it, has not a natural feature left; he has ſet it in a point of light, which I believe no man ever viewed it in. Inſtead of conſidering it as a new Revelation, A Doctrine pretended to be from God immediately; He ſays Chriſtianity is founded on Judaiſm, the *New Teſtament* on the Old, *in ſuch a manner, that* it is the deſign of the Authors of the *New*, to prove all the parts of Chriſtianity from the *Old Teſtament* *, as having its divine Authority from thence †; *that* it is not properly a New Law, but Judaiſm explained and ſet in

* Grounds and Reaſons, p. 4.
† Ib. p. 19.

in a due light *; *but* that the *Old Teſtament* is the Canon of Chriſtians, *and* yet the ſole true Canon of Scripture †. *That* the truth of Chriſtianity depends, as it ought, on ancient Revelations contain'd in the *Old Teſtament* ‖; *that* Jeſus and his Apoſtles grounded Chriſtianity on Proofs * *from thence, being* deſtitute of other or external Arguments †. But theſe Proofs taken out of the *Old* and urged in the *New Teſtament*, being not to be found in the *Old Teſtament*, or not urged in the *New* according to their literal and obvious ſenſe, are therefore no Proofs according to ſcholaſtick Rules ‖. *Yet* the Authors of the Books of the *New Teſtament* always argue abſolutely from the quotations they make out of the Books of the *Old Teſtament* *, *with Gentiles as well as Jews:* To both whom therefore they reaſon'd Allegorically †. *That* St. *Paul* ſeems to diſclaim all other methods of arguing beſides the Allegorical ‖. *Nay, that* all other methods of arguing were wholly diſcarded, and the Allegorical reaſoning ſet up by them (*the Apoſtles*) as the true and only reaſoning proper to bring all men to the faith of Chriſt *.

* Ib. p. 15.
† Ib. p. 13.
‖ Ib. p. 25.
* Ib. p. 27.
† Ib. p. 31.
‖ Ib. p. 39.
* Ib. p. 79.
† Ib. p. 80.
‖ Ib. p. 92.
* Ib. p. 94.

This is the view he has given us of Chriſtianity. I need not tell the Reader what inferences are drawn from it: neither will he have any occaſion to inquire, if it appears in every article of it to be falſe and groundleſs, the pure invention of him who made it, having not only no foundation in the *New Teſtament*, from whence only it ſhould be taken, but utterly ſubverted by it. *In proving*

proving this I ſhall conſider every article apart, and ſhew the falſe fallacious Grounds upon which it is built.

1. *Chriſtianity is not founded upon* Judaiſm, *nor was it ever intended to prove all the parts of it from the* Old Teſtament. *For tho' Chriſt and his Apoſtles did in many caſes, diſputing with the* Jews, *appeal to the* Old Teſtament *to remove their objections; yet they did dot build upon this, as their foundation; but upon a Commiſſion, they pretended to have from God immediately, to publiſh a new Doctrine to the world. Chriſt tells the* Jews, *that he* came down from Heaven, *that he* came in his Father's name, *and that* the works which the Father had given him to finiſh bore witneſs of him that the Father had ſent him. *Our Author to ſupport his ſuppoſition has crowded his* ſecond Chapter *with Inſtances, wherein he ſays, Chriſt and his Apoſtles* prove ſeveral parts of Chriſtianity from the *Old*
* Ib. p. 5. *Teſtament* *. *Moſt of them are not to his purpoſe. For whoever imagined that St.* Matthew *intended to prove Mary's* being with Child by the Holy Ghoſt; the Angel's notice of it: *Jeſus's* birth at *Bethlehem*; his flight into *Ægypt*; his dwelling at *Nazareth*, &c. from the *Old Teſtament? But to avoid contention: What if every paſſage of the* Old Teſtament *cited in the* New *was intended as a proof of ſome part or other of Chriſtianity? will it therefore follow, that all the parts of it were intended to be proved this way; that this was their only, their conſtant method; and that with* Gentiles *too, who regarded a Proof*

out

out of the Old Teſtament, *no more than we do a proof out of the* Alcoran? *Yes, ſays he,* St. *Paul*'s argument in his Epiſtle to the *Galatians* is to prove *(not ſome particular part, but)* Chriſtianity to the Jews from the *Old Teſtament* *; *who* endeavours to prove, eſpecially in his Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, that Chriſtianity was contain'd in the *Old Teſtament*, and was implied in the *Jewiſh* Hiſtory and Law †. *I could not paſs over theſe places without notice; becauſe an ordinary Reader may obſerve that the Apoſtle's principal deſign in both theſe* Epiſtles *was to prove the direct contrary; not that Chriſtianity was* contained in the *Old Teſtament*, or the Old Covenant ſpiritually underſtood; *but that the Old Covenant was to be* diſannulled, as a Law which could not give life; *that it was to be ſuperſeded by* a new and better Covenant; not according to *that which they had lived under. And all this was evidently ſaid, to remove the offence the* Jews *took at the diſcontinuance of their Law, and at the admiſſion of* Gentile *Converts, without obliging them to conform thereto. The Apoſtle's anſwer was not,* Theſe Converts do conform to your Law ſpiritually underſtood; *but contrarywiſe;* Your Law was imperfect, inſtituted but for a time, which now is and ought to be repealed.

* Ib. p. 11.

† Ib. p. 12.

Hence the Reader may begin to judge, what little reaſon there is to call the Old Teſtament the Canon of Chriſtians ‖; *who are called to a New Covenant, quite different from the Covenant eſtabliſht by the* Old Teſtament; *which*

‖ Ib. p. 13.

which laſt is by Chriſtianity expreſly diſan-
* Heb. vii. 18. *null'd* *. *And yet by the help of a few mangled paſſages groſly miſinterpreted, and a little* Scholaſtick Reaſoning, *he has given ſome colour to*
† Mat. v. 17. *it. Chriſt ſays,* † Think not that I am come to deſtroy the Law of the Prophets: I am not come to deſtroy, but to fulfil. *The Context would lead a man to interpret this of the moral Law improved and perfected by Chriſt: but our Author infers from hence, that* Jeſus and his Apoſtles are repreſented, as fulfilling, by their Miſſion, Doctrines and Works, the predictions of the Prophets, the hiſtorical parts of the Old Teſtament, and the
‖ Ib. p. 4. Jewiſh Law ‖. *Again Chriſt ſays,* All the Prophets and the Law propheſied until
* Mat. xi. 13. *John* *; *meaning that the* Jewiſh *Diſpenſation continued in full force, till the Preaching*
† Marki. 1. *of* John Baptiſt, *which is called* † the Beginning of the Goſpel: *Yet from this very Text we are told, that the Law* is expreſly ſaid
‖ Ib. p. 5. to propheſie of, or typify, Chriſtianity ‖. *How can ſuch an honeſt Interpreter want a Text to prove whatever he has a mind to prove! But* the *Old Teſtament* is ſaid to contain
* Ib. p. 4. the words of eternal life *; *therefore it muſt be our Canon. This is a plauſible proof, and ſounds like the words of our Bleſſed Lord. But when we take his words entire — What do they prove? — Let the Reader judge.* Search the Scriptures, for in them YE THINK ye have eternal life, and they are they which
* John v. 39. teſtifie of me †. *It is plain he does not give his own, but the* Jews *opinion of thoſe Scriptures; urging the obligation they were under*

from

from thence to receive him as a Prophet; because those Scriptures, so highly esteemed by them, had prepared them to expect a remarkable Prophet, such as he appeared to be.

The next Witness our Author has recourse to in confirmation of his Canon is St. Paul *, according to whom the *Old Testament* was able to make men wise unto Salvation. *The Apostle, in the place referred to* (2 Tim. iii. 15.) *is speaking to* Timothy, *who had been bred up in the study of the Scriptures of the* Old Testament, *which had led him to the acknowledgment of another more perfect Rule, the saving Grace of God revealed by the Gospel: and for this reason the Scriptures of the* Old Testament *are said to have been* able to make him wise unto salvation, *not absolutely, not of themselves, but* through Faith which is in Christ Jesus. *But it seems these latter words are mere expletives, not to our Author's purpose, and therefore ought to have been omitted. For in another place* (Acts xxvi. 22.) *this same Apostle acknowledges, that he* said none other things to any, than those which the Prophets and *Moses* did say——*But here likewise the Apostle has been guilty of the same redundancy, in going on to limit these general words of a few particulars,* that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people and to the *Gentiles; for which he stands corrected by our Author* †. *This excellent Critick has not only purged St.* Paul's *writings of some superfluous expressions, but has likewise restored*

* Ib. p. 12.

† Ib. p. 16.

others

* Ib. p. 12. *others ſuppoſed to be loſt* *. *As in that paſſage* 2 Cor. 3. 6. *which he reads thus:* We are Miniſters of the *New Teſtament*; not of the letter, but of the ſpirit (of the law.) *Without the addition of theſe words* (of the law) *the Reader might have imagin'd, that the Apoſtles taught ſome new Law or Covenant: But by that Addition the Miſtake is prevented, the* New Teſtament *does not ſignify the* New Teſtament, but the *Old Teſtament* ſpiritually underſtood; *which muſt therefore be* the ſole true Canon of Chriſtians.

But leſt St. Paul's *Teſtimony, thus corrected and explained by our Author, ſhould not ſatisfy every Reader; Jeſus and his Apoſtles are ſum-*
Ib. p. 16. *mon'd all together* †: *who* do frequently and emphatically ſtile the Books of the *Old Teſtament* the Scriptures, and refer men to them as their Rule and Canon. *And reaſon good. For 'till the Books of the* New Teſtament *were wrote, they were* the ſole true Canon of Scripture: *and it had been abſurd to call any thing by that title, which was not wrote and generally known. But it unluckily happens that Chriſtians had a Canon diſtinct from that of the* Old Teſtament, *before any one Book of the* New Teſtament *was*
‖ Acts ii. 42. *wrote: for St* Luke *ſays,* ‖ They continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles Doctrine and Fellowſhip. *However, tho' this proof be not ſo full to our Author's purpoſe, yet it muſt be allowed to be a keen judicious obſervation; and that he has given full proof of his dexterity, in making a dead Author ſpeak what he pleaſes.*

Per-

Perhaps his Scholaſtick reaſoning *will make amends for the defect of his Authorities. To prove that we have no Canon but the* Old Teſtament, *he obſerves* *, That our Saviour left nothing in writing to eſtabliſh his New Law, if it may be ſo called, which was not properly a New Law, but Judaiſm explain'd. *We will not diſpute at preſent, whether it was a* new one, *or an* old one explain'd. *For tho' it was a* new one, *it ought to be no part of our Canon, if he had not divine Authority to confirm it: But if he had, it ought to be part of our Canon, tho' it was only* an old one explained. *Our explanatory Statutes being as much part of our Laws, as the ſtatutes they were made to explain. But be it one, or t'other, it ſeems* our Saviour left nothing in writing to eſtabliſh it. *Exact indeed! I am afraid, if he had wrote, and ſign'd, and ſealed it himſelf, this* ſtrict Gentleman *would have inſiſted upon ſeeing the* Original; *and then probably would have raiſed a thouſand ſcruples about the genuineſs of Writings* 1700 *Years old. Another perſon not quite ſo ſcrupulous might think it ſufficient, that this* New Law or Comment *was committed to writing by perſons having his immediate Commiſſion, to whom he gave his Spirit to be with them always,* to guide them into all truth, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatſoever he had ſaid unto them. *But it ſeems they too were deficient. How! Did they leave nothing in writing? Yes. It is not denyed, but the Books of the* New Teſtament *were wrote by theſe (whom we*

* Ib. p. 15.

we call inſpired) *men. And if I am not miſtaken, our Author allows them to be ſuch, in repreſenting the* Old Teſtament, *as a Canon*
* Ib. p. 13, 14. *confirm'd by them* *. *And one would imagine, if their Authority was ſufficient to make other Books recommended by them canonical, it made their own ſo too. But they wrote them*
† Ib. p. 14. occaſionally †, *that is, to inſtruct men in, and correct their miſtakes about, that Religion, which Chriſt commiſſioned and inſpired them to teach the World. And what was worſe, they did not join them together in one Volume,* nor was any Collection of Books of Scripture made, whether of Goſpels or Epiſtles,
‖ Ib. p. 16. during the lives of the Apoſtles ‖. *Strange overſight! whereby Books, which they wrote by divine Authority and Inſpiration, became unauthorized and uninſpired: the collecting and joyning them together being left to be done* long after their times by weak, fallible, factious,
* Ib. p. 17. and intereſted men *. *For the Reader muſt obſerve, that 'tis the* Edition, *and not* the Authority or genius of the writer, *which gives value to a Book; as many of our polite Judges of Authors are ready to teſtify. The Reader I hope will excuſe the manner in which I have treated this part of my Subject: ſome Anſwer ſeemed neceſſary, and a ſerious one improper. But I will not diſmiſs this Subject without making a few ſerious Obſervations.*

Firſt, allowing this Author's notion of Chriſtianity to be a true one, that 'tis not properly a new Law, but Judaiſm explain'd, or the *Old Teſtament* ſpiritually underſtood; *and that* the only difference between *Jews* and

and Chriſtians is, that the former are governed by the letter, the latter by the ſpiritual ſenſe of the *Old Teſtament*; *yet the* New Teſtament *muſt be ſtrictly ſpeaking the Chriſtian's Rule or Canon. For if it does not oblige him, the Chriſtian, as ſuch, has no Rule to walk by*; *for there only can that* ſpiritual ſenſe *be found. If it does oblige him, then it his Rule or Canon.*

Again, ſuppoſing Chriſtianity to be only the ſpiritual ſenſe of the *Old Teſtament*; *it would be impoſſible, that* all the parts of it ſhould be proved thereby, or have their divine Authority from thence. *For according to this Author's account, that* ſpiritual ſenſe is ſo hidden, ſecret, and myſtical, *that it could not* have any other foundation than divine diſcernment *. *Conſequently, as it was neceſſary, that the Perſons giving this* ſpiritual ſenſe *ſhould be guided by Inſpiration*; *ſo alſo was it neceſſary, that the Perſons receiving it, ſhould have proper Proof of their being inſpired. Appealing to the* Old Teſtament *in this caſe could be to no purpoſe*; *which would only prove, that the* Old Teſtament *contained matters interpreted to a* ſpiritual ſenſe; *but could not prove that* ſpiritual ſenſe to be by divine diſcernment, *which is the point to be proved. According to this repreſentation therefore, it is ſo far from being true,* that the truth of Chriſtianity ought to depend upon ancient Revelations contained in the *Old Teſtament, and be proved thereby*; *that 'tis abſolutely neceſſary it ſhould be proved ſome other way.*

* Ib. p. 93.

But further, we utterly deny this repreſentation of Chriſtianity to be a true one. It is properly and ſtrictly ſpeaking a New Law, *ſuperſeding and taking place of the Law or Covenant eſtabliſhed by the* Old Teſtament; *repealing Laws, which the* Jews *were obliged to obſerve, and eſtabliſhing new ones not required under their Covenant: the obligations of theſe two Covenants are as different* *, *as the obligations incumbent on children are from thoſe of grown perſons; and the Oeconomy as different* †, *as that of a wiſe Magiſtrate in times of raging peſtilence, from that he would uſe in time of publick health. I will not enter here upon the Proof of this account of Chriſtianity, but refer the Reader to the fifth Sermon, which treats on this Subject:*

* Gal. iv. 3.

† Gal. iii. 19.

And proceed to conſider, how Chriſtianity, as a new Law or Revelation, *is proved to be of Divine Inſtitution. This is the ſubject and deſign of the following Sermons. But it may be proper here to obſerve, by what arts and ſubtilties, our Author has attempted to ſeduce his Reader's judgment, telling him,* That the grand fundamental Article of Chriſtianity was, that Jeſus was the *Meſſiah* of the *Jews* predicted in the *Old Teſtament* ||, *which could not* appear and be proved but from the *Old Teſtament*; *that* the truth of Chriſtianity depends, as it ought, on ancient Revelations contained in the *Old Teſtament*; *that* Jeſus and his Apoſtles ground Chriſtianity on Proofs *from thence, which* ſhould ſeem deſtitute of other, or external arguments. *In all which there is not one word of truth. For the*

|| Ib. p. 12.

Fundamental

Fundamental Article of Chriſtianity is, That Jeſus was a Prophet, a Teacher come from God, ſpeaking the words of God, to whom God had given his Spirit without meaſure: *That his Apoſtles, who were commiſſion'd by him to publiſh his Doctrine to the world, were aſſiſted by the Spirit of God* leading them into all truth, and bringing all things to their remembrance, that Chriſt had ſaid unto them. *This is the true foundation of Chriſtianity, upon which we receive and acknowledge the Doctrines thereof to be of Divine Inſtitution. And there is no Man can deny, let him be* Jew *or* Gentile, Deiſt *or* Freethinker, *the validity of it. If this Article can be eſtabliſhed upon rational principles, the conſequence is clear and indiſputable, That the Doctrine taught by ſuch Perſons was of God, and ought to be ſubmitted to. This foundation is of it ſelf ſufficient to ſupport every other Article of Chriſtianity, without any ſpecial Proof drawn from a preceding Revelation to confirm it. Will the foundation propoſed by our Author do the buſineſs ſo effectually? No. For ſuppoſe it never ſo plainly proved,* That Jeſus was the *Meſſiah* predicted in the *Old Teſtament, it could affect none but* Jews, *who believed the* Old Teſtament *to be a Divine Revelation; and therefore could not conſiſtently reject a Prophet juſtified thereby. But what influence could it have upon a* Gentile, *not acknowledging thoſe Scriptures to be of God? This Author ſuppoſes it could have none at all: and therefore tells*

*Ib. p. 95. *you* *, *that a* Gentile *ought regularly to be converted to* Judaiſm, *in order to be made a Chriſtian. But how ſhall he be converted to* Judaiſm? *Muſt he look further back for another preceding Revelation? Yes; and backwards ſtill; till he is either loſt among the dark uncertain records of Antiquity; or finds out a Revelation, which has ſome* abſolute, *and not this* relative Proof *taken from a preceding Revelation to ſupport it. So that this method of building one Revelation upon another, will in the end be found uſeleſs, and ſome other more eſſential Proof neceſſary, to convince a rational Inquirer: whoſe reaſon I am perſuaded would lead him a ſhorter and a ſurer way to truth, and this new Method, which the further it is proſecuted, grows ſtep by ſtep more precarious.*

When a Man is come at ſome certainty about a Revelation, it may be proper to call in that Revelation to the aſſiſtance of his Reaſon in his further inquiries. But when the Proof of Revelation is the ſubject of his inquiry, a wiſe man will not much regard, what Proof a Turk, *or a* Jew, *or a* Chriſtian, *as ſuch, are apt to take up with and depend upon; or how the opinions of one Sect are ſupported by thoſe of another; but will impartially conſult his Reaſon, what Rules are moſt proper to be obſerved in judging of Revelations pretended to be of God.*

I have endeavoured therefore in my firſt Sermon *to diſcover, what Rules natural Reaſon unaſſiſted by Revelation would direct us to obſerve*

ſerve in examining Doctrines pretended to be of God.

The ſecond and third Sermons *are to ſhew, that Chriſtianity is juſtified by thoſe Rules; that it has ſuch Proof, as impartial Reaſon would incline us to approve; and that this Proof is much inſiſted on by Chriſt and his Apoſtles.*

In the fourth Sermon *I have endeavoured to vindicate this Proof from the objections of our Adverſary, and to ſhew that it cannot be overthrown without ſupplanting the foundation, upon which every preceding true Revelation muſt be ultimately built.*

But if we conſider the circumſtances of Mankind, when Chriſtianity firſt appeared in the World, we may obſerve that the firſt Teachers of it had another part to act, beſides offering the direct and rational Proofs confirming its Divine Authority. They had the pre-conceived prejudices of Men bred up in, and very tenacious of, other religious Inſtitutions to ſtruggle with. To engage them to quit the Old, and embrace a New Inſtitution, it was neceſſary to convince them, either that the Religion they were bred up in was an impoſture, and ought for that reaſon to be rejected; which was the method they took with the Gentiles *(Acts* xiv. 11—18. *and* Chap. xvii. 22—31.) *or elſe, that their Religion was alterable, and did admit of a new Diſpenſation to ſucceed it. This latter was the part they had to act with* Jews; *their Revelation being allowed to be of God. This occaſioned the frequent appeals we meet with in the* New *to the* Old Teſtament;

not as the foundation of Chriſtianity; but as arguments drawn from thence were moſt proper to remove the prejudices of the Jews *againſt it.*

Accordingly I have endeavoured in my fifth Sermon *by Proofs taken out of the* Old Teſtament *to ſhew, that the* Jewiſh *Diſpenſation was alterable and intended to be altered. Which may ſerve to ſhew the error of thoſe* Jews, *who (as our Author ſays *)* had not the leaſt imagination of any alteration of their Divine Law, which they thought was to be eternal.

* Ib. p. 34.

But beſides this general prejudice againſt the Chriſtian Doctrine, they had conceived particular prejudices againſt the Perſon of Chriſt the Author of it. They could not object, that their Scriptures had not prepared them to expect a great Prophet to come into the world; or that Chriſt did not bring with him the uſual and neceſſary Credentials of his being ſuch: yet they were offended in him for two reaſons; That they did not expect their Meſſiah *(which* Jeſus *pretended to be) to appear in a low and ſuffering condition; and that they expected a* temporal Deliverance *from him, Victory and Triumph over the heathen world. Here again therefore it was proper to have recourſe to the* Old Teſtament *to remove theſe prejudices.*

Accordingly in my ſixth Sermon *I have proved, that their great Prophet was to ſuffer, and by his Sufferings to procure a* ſpiritual Deliverance *for them; and that our Bleſſed Lord ſuffered in the very manner foretold in the* Old Teſtament.

In

In the Laſt Sermon *I have proved from the ſame Scriptures, that the* Meſſiah *was not to ſubdue by violence the Heathen World, but was to be in an eſpecial manner a Bleſſing to them; thro' whom they were to be enlightened, converted from idolatry, received into Covenant with God; to which Covenant they were to conform with the greateſt freedom and willingneſs, and not be driven to it by force or compulſion: Which predictions I have obſerved likewiſe, were accompliſhed thro' Chriſt.*

This being done, I think a further Defence of Chriſtianity from the Old Teſtament *needleſs. For why are the Scriptures of the* Old Teſtament *appealed to in the Chriſtian Cauſe? Did Chriſt want any rational or uſual Proof of his Commiſſion? Did he want ſuch Proof, as had been preſcribed for the tryal of Prophets? or ſuch, as had been given to any of the preceding* Jewiſh *Prophets? None of theſe. Why then were the* Jews *offended in him? Becauſe of certain prejudices againſt him, pretended to be taken from the* Old Teſtament. *What more then was needful to be done, than to ſhew that thoſe prejudices had no juſt foundation in the* Old Teſtament, *from whence they were pretended to be taken? The prejudices we have diſcovered; we have appealed to the* Old Teſtament *thereupon; and can with ſatisfaction obſerve, that thoſe very parts of Chriſt's Character and Conduct, with which the* Jews *were offended, inſtead of claſhing with, are directly juſtified by the* Old Teſtament. *If this be done in a rational con-*

vincing way, we hope the impartial Reader will allow that Chriſtianity (ſo far as it needed any Proof from the Old Teſtament) *is effectually juſtified thereby. And we think it is ſo done: becauſe the paſſages we appeal to in determining theſe conteſted Points, are direct and full to the purpoſe; are taken in a ſenſe that is natural, eaſy and obvious*; in a ſenſe agreeable to the *Context*; in that one ſenſe which is to be found out by a critical examination of the words; *and in a ſenſe ſo ſtrict and neceſſary, that it is not* poſſible to find out any other Perſon or Event (beſides *Jeſus* and the matters relating to him) to which they may be adapted without the greateſt violence to the *Text*.

When I ſay this, I am not inſenſible what a ſhrewd Adverſary I have againſt me; who inſtead of allowing what I have aſſerted, ſays, Proofs taken out of the *Old*, and urged in the *New Teſtament*, being not to be found in the *Old*, or not urged in the *New* according to their literal and obvions ſenſe, are therefore not Proofs according to ſcholaſtick Rules. *Yet* the Authors of the Books of the *New Teſtament* always argue abſolutely from the quotations they make out of the *Old Teſtament*, *with* Gentiles *as well as* Jews: To both whom therefore they reaſoned allegorically. Nay, all other methods of arguing were wholly diſcarded, and the allegorical reaſoning ſet up by them (*the Apoſtles*) as the true and only reaſoning proper to bring all Men to the Faith

Faith of Chriſt. *This is the finiſhing ſtroke! and it is doing the buſineſs thoroughly! It is not like your* petty ſcriblers, *who are continually catching at ſome little colourable pretence to expoſe Chriſtianity! It is an attack by ſtorm, which makes the very foundations of Chriſtianity ſhake! And why ſhould he mince the matter? If a falſhood muſt be uttered, why not a bold one? why not as many as will do the work effectually? It was not enough to ſay, that the Apoſtles ſometimes uſed* typical or allegorical Proofs *in their reaſonings from the* Old Teſtament; *but that their reaſonings from thence was always of this kind. It was not enough to ſay, that they always argued thus with* Jews, who were accuſtomed to that way of reaſoning; *but that* to *Gentiles* as well as *Jews* they reaſoned allegorically. *It was not enough to ſay, that they mixed this ſort of reaſoning with other arguments urged in defence of Chriſtianity; but that* they diſclaimed all other methods of arguing, and ſet up allegorical reaſoning, as the true and only reaſoning proper to bring all Men to the Faith of Chriſt? *To whom does he ſay this? to any one that has ever read the* New Teſtament? *or is it not rather to perſons determined never to read it, but to believe every thing that without a grain of reaſon or modeſty ſhall be ſaid againſt it?*

If there could be but one inſtance *produced out of the* New Teſtament, *where an Apoſtle arguing with Unbelievers did uſe ſome other Proof, beſides the* allegorical; *it would*

ſuffice

ſuffice to diſprove this bold Aſſertion, That the Apoſtles diſcarded all other methods of reaſoning, and ſet up allegorical reaſoning, as the true and only reaſoning proper to bring all men to the Faith of Chriſt: *And yet 'tis notoriouſly true, that* in every inſtance, *where Chriſt or his Apoſtles argue with Unbelievers, whether* Jews *or* Gentiles, *they conſtantly have recourſe to other arguments; ſo far were they from building their doctrine upon* allegorical reaſoning *only. So far from* diſcarding all other methods of reaſoning, *that other methods of reaſoning are conſtantly uſed; and ſometimes without ſo much as a ſingle Proof out of the* Old Teſtament *joined therewith. But to give a more diſtinct anſwer to this falſe account of the reaſoning uſed by Chriſt and his Apoſtles with Unbelievers; I undertake to prove.*

That they never reaſoned from the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament *at all with the* Gentiles *diſbelieving thoſe Scriptures.*

That with Jews *believing thoſe Scriptures, they always inſiſted on other Proofs beſide thoſe taken from the* Old Teſtament.

That the Proofs taken out of the Old Teſtament *are not all typical or allegorical.*

That our Author has not produced one inſtance *of a typical or allegorical Proof, uſed at any time by Chriſt or his Apoſtles with Unbelievers. More than this I think need not be done to prove, that his account of the* Grounds and Reaſons of Chriſtianity *is entirely falſe and groundleſs.*

1. *I obſerve that the Apoſtles never reaſoned from the* Old Teſtament *at all with* Gentiles

Gentiles *who disbelieved it. If they had, it would not follow that they reaſoned with them allegorically; becauſe all Proofs taken from thence are not allegorical. He obſerves indeed very juſtly* * *that* the Authors *of the New Teſtament* deſigned their books for the uſe of all men, for *Gentiles* as well as *Jews. From whence he infers as unjuſtly*, to both whom therefore they reaſoned allegorically in thoſe books. *Any other man but himſelf would have concluded, that, as the Apoſtles deſigned their books for the uſe of all men; as a Proof taken out of the* Old Teſtament *could not affect a* Gentile *disbelieving it; therefore they offered other Proofs for the conviction of* Gentiles, *and not allegorical Proofs taken out of the* Old Teſtament. *However he is obſtinately bent to ſupport his own concluſion at any rate. He therefore tells you* † *that allegorical reaſoning was* pertinent only to a very few *Jews; that* the *Sadducees* a numerous ſect oppoſed it; *that* the *Phariſees* in great meaſure quitted it, when Chriſtianity prevailed. *But on the other hand* ‖, Allegory was much in uſe among the *Pagans, their Philoſophers, their Poets, all gave into it: from them the* Jews *learnt it* *, who knew nothing of the allegorical method, 'till long after the captivity, when they became *Hellenized. Hitherto* Gentiles *are the real Allegoriſts, and* Jews *ſuch only by infection. Go a little further, and the tables are turned. As if the* Jews *were the only Allegoriſts, and* Gentiles *knew nothing of the matter, he tells you* †,

* Ib. p. 81.

† Ib. p. 81.

‖ Ib. p. 83, &c.

* Ib. p. 90.

† Ib. p. 92.

Gentiles

Gentiles were to become Allegoriſts or myſtical *Jews*, were to be wholly beat out of the literal way of arguing, and to argue as
* Ib. p.94. became *Jews* *, *that is allegorically*; *and not*
† Ib. p.95. *'till then* † were they in equal condition with *Jews* to be converted by type and allegory. *What a* ſcholaſtick *argument is here! Dilemma with a witneſs! For whether* Jews *or* Gentiles *were Allegoriſts, whether both or neither, every way his ſcheme muſt ſtand upon this invincible foundation, a knot of Contradictions. And there let it ſtand. For it does not much concern us, whence Allegory had its riſe; who learnt it firſt, or who loved it moſt,* Jews *or* Gentiles: *let him take one ſide or t'other, or both, it makes no difference with reſpect to the* New Teſtament, *or the reaſoning contained therein.*

I ſhall therefore proceed to conſider the inſtances produc'd by him to prove, that particular Apoſtles did, in their ſermons and diſcourſes made expreſsly to *Gentiles disbelieving the* Old
‖ Ib. p. 80. Teſtament, *reaſon with them from thence* ‖. *And the Reader may well think he was hard ſet to find inſtances to his purpoſe, when the Defence which St.* Paul *made for himſelf as a criminal, againſt the accuſations of the* Jews, *before* Felix (*Acts* xxiv.) *and before* Agrippa (*Acts* xxvi.) *are reckoned two of the* Sermons, *wherein he reaſons with* Gentiles *out of the* Old Teſtament. *The nature of the accuſation brought againſt him made it neceſſary for him to appeal to the* Old Teſtament *in his Defence: he appealed thereto, to wipe off the crime the* Jews *had charged him with, not to make*

Couverts

Converts of the Gentiles, *who were his Hearers.*

Another inſtance given of the Apoſtles reaſoning with Gentiles *from the* Old Teſtament *is St.* Paul's *Diſcourſe* (Acts xiii. 14, *&c.*) in the Synagogue *at* Antioch, *to the* men of Iſrael, *ver.* 16. Children *of* the ſtock of *Abraham*, ver. 26. *to whom* it was neceſſary that the word of God ſhould have been firſt ſpoken, *ver.* 46. *to whom then was this diſcourſe directed? He ſays*, p. 8. to the *Jews in the* Synagogue *at* Antioch. *But to ſerve a turn, in deſpight of naked truth and ſelf-conviction, he calls it*, p. 80. a Diſcourſe made expreſsly to *Gentiles.*

He appeals farther to the caſe of St. Luke, *who* (*he ſays* *) in his Goſpel and Acts repreſents the Grounds of Chriſtianity, and argues for it in the ſame typical manner, from the *Old Teſtament*, with St. *Paul* and the other Apoſtles, who were originally *Jews*: in which two Books he may not untruly be ſuppoſed to declare the Grounds of his own conviction, and to repreſent thoſe Grounds to other *Gentiles*, as ſufficient for their conviction alſo. *The anſwer to this is very eaſy. St.* Luke's *buſineſs was that of an Hiſtorian, to give an account of the Actions and Diſcourſes of Chriſt and his Apoſtles in the courſe of their miniſtry. In his Books therefore the Reader muſt expect to find the reaſoning of Chriſt and his Apoſtles with* Jews *as well as* Gentiles. *And if the Evangeliſt had taken notice of no other Converts made, but by reaſoning from the* Old Teſtament;

* Ib. p. 96.

ment; *if he had repreſented the Apoſtles arguing with* Gentiles *and* Jews *promiſcuouſly from thence; then this caſe of St.* Luke *had been to our Author's purpoſe. But as the contrary is notoriouſly true, that he takes notice of other methods of conviction uſed by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, beſides arguments drawn from the* Old Teſtament, *of Converts frequently made by thoſe methods only; as in the relation he gives of Diſcourſes made to* Gentiles *only, there is not one citation from, nor any mention made of, the* Old Teſtament; *the caſe of St.* Luke, *inſtead of anſwering his purpoſe, is directly againſt it.*

His laſt, his only refuge is the preaching of St. *Peter* to *Cornelius*, Acts x. 34,—43.

* Ib. p. 96. *which (he ſays* *) puts the matter paſt diſpute. *No.* Cornelius, *though an alien and uncircumciſed, was a Proſelyte, worſhipped the God of* Iſrael, *believed the Scriptures of the* Old Teſtament; *to whom therefore a Proof out of the* Old Teſtament *was as proper and as concluſive as to a* Jew. *It could not be ſo to unproſelyted* Gentiles, *diſbelieving thoſe Scriptures; therefore to ſuch the Apoſtles never argued from thence. See* Acts xiv. 11,—18. *and Chap.* xvii. 22—31.

I muſt in this place take notice of another ſtrange ſort of argument *alledged to prove, that the Apoſtles did argue with* Gentiles *from the* Old Teſtament, *and that allegorically.*

† Ib. p. 92. *He ſays* †, The Apoſtle *Paul* in his firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, firſt and ſecond Chapters (wherein it is to be obſerved, that he argues againſt the *Greeks* and the Philoſophers,

ſophers, as well as the *Jews*) ſeems to diſclaim all other methods of arguing beſides the allegorical. *This notion is founded upon a ſuppoſition, that by* the Wiſdom of God, the hidden Wiſdom which God ordained before the world, *and the like expreſſions, is meant* the ſecret ſpiritual ſenſe of Judaiſm; *that this Wiſdom is ſet in oppoſition to* the common rules of wiſdom or philoſophy or diſputing, *called by the Apoſtle*, Man's wiſdom, the wiſdom of this world, *and* the wiſdom of the age. *But if he had been diſpoſed to ſearch for the Apoſtle's meaning* by a critical examination of his words, *he would have found that by* man's wiſdom, worldly wiſdom, *&c. is meant ſuch a groſs ſenſe of things, as is affected only with carnal or worldly motives, by which therefore the Doctrine of the Croſs was accounted fooliſhneſs*, Chap. i. 18. *and therefore* not many wiſe men after the fleſh, *(who mind earthly and ſenſual things) were called, or inclined to embrace it*, ver. 26, 27. *Therefore he ſays*, Chap. ii. 4. My Speech and my Preaching was not with enticing words of man's wiſdom: *he could not propoſe worldly or carnal motives to engage their affections; but endeavoured to convince them by the miraculous Powers of the Holy Ghoſt communicated to him, which he calls the* demonſtration of the Spirit and of Power. *Hereon the Faith of Chriſtians was founded*, ver. 5. not in the wiſdom of men, but the Power of God. *He goes on to ſhew, that as the arguments, ſo the motives of the Goſpel were not carnal, but ſuch as*, Eye hath not ſeen, nor

nor ear heard, *ver.* 9. *the diſcovery whereof is oppoſed to* the wiſdom of this world and of the Princes of this world, *ver.* 6. *and is therefore called* the hidden wiſdom ordained before the world, *ver.* 7. which none of the Princes of this world knew, *ver.* 8. *but* was revealed by the Spirit, *ver.* 10. *Theſe are the things of the* Spirit, *which* the natural Man (Ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος *the ſenſual man*) perceiveth not, *ver.* 13. *In this bad ſenſe is the word uſed,* Ja. iii. 15. Jud. 19. *and thus it is explained by the Apoſtle in the next Chapter,* ver. 1—3. *where he ſubſtitutes in the room of it* σαρκικὸς carnal, *the effects whereof are* envy, ſtrife, diviſions, *the known effects of a carnal worldly temper. It is plain therefore that by the* natural man *the Apoſtle did not mean one, who examined and judged of things by the rules of true Wiſdom or Philoſophy; but one, who regarded only the intereſts and gratifications of a mere animal life. This latter perhaps may be our Author's notion of true Philoſophy: for he, that reckons a* temporal deliverance the only real one, *may well be ſuppoſed to place true philoſophy in a ſtrict care for the things of the body. This however, be it true or falſe wiſdom, we allow is cenſured by the Apoſtle; to which he prefers, not allegorical reaſoning, but that ſpiritual Wiſdom, which can abſtract it ſelf from the conſideration of things preſent and ſenſible, and has regard to thoſe future good things,* which God hath prepared for them that love him. And the Event of preaching the Goſpel has been ſuited to matters conſidered in this view and light. For

For we know that the wiſe (*according to the fleſh, who counted the Doctrine of the Croſs fooliſhneſs*) did not receive the Goſpel at firſt, which plainly aroſe from their uſing maxims of reaſoning wholly oppoſite to thoſe of Chriſtians: out of all which maxims they have *not yet* been beaten by the ſpiritual reaſoners, *though they are* brought into the Goſpel. *For the very ſame* maxims *of worldly intereſt, which kept them out at the beginning of the Goſpel,* have now brought theſe wiſe Men according to the fleſh into it, *ſince the ſunſhine of worldly proſperity has dawned upon the Chriſtian Church.*

You ſee what poor ſhifts our Author has been driven to, that he might give ſome colour to his allegorical ſcheme; how ready he has been to catch at the ſound of words only, if they do but ſeem *to ſound to his purpoſe; how he has not ſcrupled to* make *an inſtance, at the expence of ſelf-contradiction, of the Apoſtle's reaſoning with* Gentiles *from the* Old Teſtament. *Yet all will not do: For allowing that the Apoſtles did reaſon with* Gentiles *from the* Old Teſtament, *it will not follow that they reaſoned with them allegorically from thence; allowing that they did reaſon allegorically with them from thence, it will not follow that they ſet it up,* as the only reaſoning proper to bring them to the Faith of Chriſt. *But they did not argue with them at all from that topick; they did not ſo much as name the* Old Teſtament *to* Gentiles *diſbelieving it; much leſs did they reaſon allegorically with them from thence.*

2. *Even with* Jews *believing thoſe Scriptures they always inſiſted on other Proofs, beſides thoſe taken from the* Old Teſtament: *It it is natural to ſuppoſe that Chriſt and his Apoſtles, in the diſputes they had with* Jews, *ſhould have occaſion to appeal to the* Old Teſtament. *When the* Jews *ſtarted objections from thence, it was proper they ſhould be anſwered in that way: When they pretended a regard to thoſe Scriptures, as a reaſon for rejecting Chriſt, it was proper to ſhew them that thoſe Scriptures, inſtead of excuſing, rather aggravated their unbelief. But this was not the only way of reaſoning with* Jews: *other kinds of Proof were inſiſted on, and more inſiſted on for their conviction, than Proofs taken out of the* Old Teſtament. *It was very cuſtomary with our Saviour, when the* Jews *diſputed his Miſſion, to appeal to the Miracles he had done among them; and if they asked a farther ſign, to refer them to the future Miracle of his Reſurrection, as the greateſt and moſt convincing Proof they were to expect. I will give a few inſtances, to ſhew the ſtreſs he laid on this ſort of Proof iu his reaſoning with them.*

When the Jews *looked upon him as a Blaſphemer rather than a Prophet, for pretending to forgive ſins; what method did he take to convince them?* That ye may know that the ſon of man hath power on earth to forgive ſins (he ſaid unto the ſick of the palſie) I ſay unto thee, Ariſe, and take up thy couch, and go into thine houſe. And immediately

immediately he roſe up before them. *Luke* v. 24. *When certain of the* Scribes *and* Phariſees *inſiſted on further Proof to confirm his Authority, he told them the utmoſt Proof that ſhould be given them, was the Miracle of his Reſurrection.* An evil and adulterous generation ſeeketh after a ſign, and there ſhall no ſign be given to it, but the ſign of the prophet *Jonas*. For as *Jonas* was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; ſo ſhall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. *Matth.* xii. 39, 40. *I would not have the Reader be deceived by our Author, who ſuggeſts, that the deliverance of* Jonas *is repreſented as a typical Prophecy of Chriſt's Reſurrection; and that the Proof here urged conſiſts in the completion of that Prophecy. For the plain reaſon, why our Lord repreſents his Reſurrection in this comparative light, was to ſhew the inexcuſableneſs of them who ſhould reject him when juſtified thereby. The* Jews *allowed* Jonas's *Miſſion to the* Ninevites *to have been ſufficiently juſtified by his deliverance; and they could not think the Reſurrection of a Perſon, three days after he had been put to death as an impoſtor, a leſs convincing Proof; therefore it would be inexcuſable in them to reject it, as Chriſt tells them in the next verſe.* The men of *Nineveh* ſhall riſe in judgment with this generation, and ſhall condemn it, becauſe they repented at the preaching of *Jonas*, and behold, a greater than *Jonas* is here. *This therefore is repreſented as a miraculous Interpoſition*

poſition of Providence, which ought of it ſelf to convince the Jews, *that the Perſon ſo juſtified was a true Prophet.*

St. John, *who gives the moſt particular account of the conteſts between Chriſt and the* Jews *about his Miſſion, generally repreſents him appealing to his Miracles in his juſtification, not* as works foretold to be done by the *Meſſiah, but as works, which* bore witneſs of him that the Father had ſent him. *There is one inſtance which deſerves particular notice,* John x. 24. &c. *The Evangeliſt tells us, the* Jews *came to* Jeſus, *and ſaid,* How long doſt thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Chriſt, tell us plainly. *What way does Chriſt take to ſatisfy them? He anſwers,* ver. 25. The Works that I do in my Father's Name, they bear witneſs of me. *They being offended with him for calling God his Father, he replies again,* ver. 37, 38. If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not: but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him. *In this whole Diſcourſe there is no Proof offered from the* Old Teſtament; *his Miracles only are inſiſted on, and they, as ſufficient Proof that he was the Chriſt. And this reaſoning prevailed with many, as we read,* ver. 41, 42. Many reſorted unto him, and ſaid, *John* did no miracle: but all things that *John* ſpake of this Man were true. And many believed on him there. *I need offer no more inſtances to prove, that Chriſt and his Apoſtles*

Apoſtles in their reaſoning with Jews, *did not argue from the* Old Teſtament *only*; *much leſs did they* ſet up allegorical reaſoning, as the only reaſoning proper to bring *even Jews* to the Faith of Chriſt. *Beſides had they argued with* Jews *from the* Old Teſtament *only, it would not follow that allegorical reaſoning, was the only reaſoning uſed with them*; *becauſe*

3. *The Proofs taken out of the* Old Teſtament *and urged in the* New *are not all typical or allegorical. I think this propoſition fully proved in the three laſt Sermons. Wherein I have particularly conſidered the points conteſted by the* Jews, *the prejudices they pretended to have taken to Chriſt from the* Old Teſtament; *and obſerved, that the paſſages appealed to by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, to remove thoſe prejudices, were ſtrictly applicable to the purpoſe, not* in a ſecondary, or typical, or myſtical, or allegorical, or enigmatical ſenſe, or in a ſenſe different from the obvious and literal ſenſe which they bear in the *Old Teſtament. Our Author, who aſſerts the contrary, though he found occaſion to mention the particular prejudices of the* Jews; *yet, for reaſons beſt known to himſelf, never thought fit to take the leaſt notice of the Propheſies cited by Chriſt and his Apoſtles to remove thoſe prejudices, or to prove the application of them to be typical. One would have thought theſe, rather than any other, ought to have been particularly conſidered by him; becauſe they are of greateſt conſequence in the debate: Nevertheleſs he has totally declined the work; chuſing*

a much eaſier way to poſſeſs his unwary Reader with a notion, that they alſo are typically applied. It is this:

There is a ſort of Argument, which Logicians call Induction; *whereby you prove a* general Propoſition *to be true, by proving, that what is aſſerted therein is true of every* particular *contain'd under it. The application of this Rule proves very tedious, when the* particulars, *contain'd under the* general Propoſition *to be proved, are numerous. For without a ſpecial enumeration of every* particular, *the Argument will not be perfectly concluſive; becauſe what is true of ſome, or of a great many* particulars, *may not be true of all: Therefore the more defective the enumeration is, the more uncertain will the concluſion be. Yet this ſort of argument may ſometimes be applied with a great deal of probability, without ſuch a ſpecial enumeration, if the* Induction *conſiſts of the moſt queſtionable* particulars: *For if what you aſſert in your* general Propoſition *be found true of thoſe* particulars, *which ſeem'd moſt to contradict it; then 'twill very probably be true of the reſt, which have not been much conteſted. This is the ſort of Argument uſed by our Author. His* general Propoſition *to be proved is, That* the Proofs taken out of the *Old Teſtament* and urged in the *New* are all typical or allegorical Proofs. *In his* Induction *he has not indeed enumerated every* particular Proof *inſiſted on from the* Old Teſtament. *This had been tedious and may be excuſed; if he has been careful to collect ſuch Proofs, as ſeem'd to have a more than ordinary*

ordinary ſtreſs laid upon them; ſuch as were alledged to determine points in conteſt; ſuch as ſeemed moſt to claſh with and contradict his typical Scheme; I ſay, if his Induction *conſiſts of ſuch as theſe, and theſe are proved to be typically or myſtically applied; then we allow, that it might with a good deal of Probability be concluded, that all are ſuch. Inſtead of this, he has given us five Inſtances of paſſages of the* Old Teſtament *referred to in the* New; *which, ſuppoſing them never ſo ſtrictly and literally applied, could add little or no weight to the Chriſtian Cauſe; no conteſted point depended thereupon; they were never urged by Chriſt or his Apoſtles for the Conviction of unbelievers: and from theſe few inſtances, ſo immaterial at leaſt, if not entirely foreign to his purpoſe, he infers that all Proofs, taken out of the* Old *and urged in the* New Teſtament, *are thus typically applied; and that Chriſt and his Apoſtles never argued, but in this typical manner. If this be arguing according to ſcholaſtick Rule, what is there a man may not prove or diſprove thereby?*

He ſays indeed, that he has particularly conſider'd all other Propheſies cited, and finds them all alledged in a ſecondary or typical ſenſe: But I cannot help thinking, that in this aſſertion he has wilfully impoſed upon his Reader. For had this been his opinion of all Propheſies, common ſenſe would have directed him, to inſiſt particularly upon ſuch as ſeem'd moſt literal, moſt contrary to his own ſcheme; that having proved theſe to be typical, he might have argued a fortiori, *that the reſt are*

ſo too. But this has not been done, or any thing like it. His Argument by Induction *therefore, after all poſſible allowance made, is altogether inconcluſive; the Prophecies we appeal to, as ſtrictly applicable to the purpoſes of Chriſtianity remain unconteſted, in direct cantradiction to his hypotheſis, That* Proofs taken out of the *Old* and urged in the *New Teſtament* are all typical or allegorical Proofs. *I will now proceed to a particular conſideration of thoſe few inſtances he has offered in defence of his typical ſcheme. And I hope to prove, that there is not one of them to his purpoſe;*

4. *That he has not produced one inſtance of a* typical or allegorical Proof, *uſed at any time by Chriſt or his Apoſtles for the conviction of Unbelievers. More than this, I think, need not be done to prove, that his account of the Grounds and Reaſons of Chriſtianity is entirely falſe and groundleſs. We do allow, that there are paſſages of the* Old Teſtament *cited and applied to Chriſt, and matters relating to him, which in their obvious and primary ſenſe had reſpect to other matters; and that the Evangeliſts take notice in the courſe of their Hiſtory, how ſeveral Sayings of the* Old Teſtament, *ſpoken in the Perſons of other men, and having reference to other events, were likewiſe fulfilled or verified through Chriſt. And if they had done this upon no other motive, than that current notion of the* Jews, *that* ſeveral events were ſo ordered, and ſo ſpoken of under the *Old Teſtament*, as to prefigure and bear ſome analogy to other events, which ſhould come

come to paſs in the *Meſſiah*'s days, *they could not be ſaid to have acted impertinently: provided, they laid no ſtreſs upon ſuch applications for the conviction of unbelievers. This is the matter in queſtion*; not whether there are any typical applications; *but* whether ſuch typical applications are inſiſted on, as convincing Proofs in confirmation of Chriſtianity. *To determine this point it may be proper to conſider every Inſtance alledged by our Author to ſupport his ſide of the Queſtion.*

Inſt. 1. *St.* Matthew, *giving an acconnt of the conception of the Virgin* Mary, *and of the birth of Jeſus, obſerves, That by this event the ſaying of* Iſaiah vii. 14. *was fulfilled,* Behold a Virgin ſhall be with Child, and ſhall bring forth a Son, and ſhall call his name *Emanuel. Upon which our Author ſays* *, The words as they ſtand in *Iſaiah* do, in their obvious and literal ſenſe, relate to a young woman in the days of *Ahaz* King of *Judah. And does the Evangeliſt ſay the contrary? He does not ſay that the Prophecy related only to Chriſt, nor that it was fulfilled in him only; nor does he apply more of it to him, than was ſtrictly and literally fulfilled in him. What has he done then, which cannot be juſtified? Our Author ſays* †, Thus he proves *Mary*'s being with child by the Holy Ghoſt, *&c. Ridiculous! Had the Prophecy related to none but the* Meſſiah, *had it been expreſly ſaid, the* Meſſiah *ſhall be born of a Virgin, it could not have proved this! The Evangeliſt does not offer to prove this fact by the Prophecy; but firſt atteſts the fact as an Hiſtorian,*

* Ib. p. 41.

* Ib. p. 5.

rian, and then obſerves how the words of the Prophet was verified thereby. We allow the application of this paſſage to Chriſt is not apparently neceſſary; and we allow that if it had been alledged as a Proof, to determine a conteſted Point, the concluſion would have been doubtful: But the caſe is far otherwiſe; no body ever objected, that Jeſus was not the Meſſiah, *becauſe he was born of a Virgin; and conſequently it could not need a Proof from the* Old Teſtament *to juſtify it.*

Inſt. 2. *We allow alſo the application of thoſe words of* Hoſeah, (xi. 1.) Out of *Egypt* have I called my Son, *to Chriſt's return out of* Egypt, *to be typical; we allow that,* according to their obvious ſenſe in the *Old Teſtament,* they relate to a paſt action; *nor does the Evangeliſt's application of them in any wiſe contradict this opinion: For it is certainly true notwithſtanding, that they were fulfilled, literally fulfilled in Chriſt. And it is not at all improbable, that God intended the remarkable Event befalling the children of* Iſrael, *his nominal or adopted Son, who fled for ſafety into* Egypt *and returned from thence again) to anſwer to another Event which ſhould befall Chriſt his real Son: And this is the utmoſt that can be gathered from the Apoſtle's application of that paſſage to Chriſt. But there is no manner of reaſon to imagine, that he deſigned it as a Proof, that Jeſus was the* Meſſiah: *for he draws no inference from it, nor did the Event to which it is applied, need a Proof from the* Old Teſtament *to juſtify it. If it had been expreſsly*

expreſsly ſaid, The *Meſſiah* ſhall flee into *Ægypt,* and return from thence, *it would not have proved Jeſus to be the* Meſſiah; *becauſe an Impoſtor might have done the ſame. On the other hand, his having been in* Ægypt *could be no objection againſt him; conſequently to offer a Proof in vindication of it was needleſs.*

Theſe two inſtances therefore are not to our Author's purpoſe: for though the application in both be typical; yet they are not alledged as Proofs. And if any one will give himſelf the trouble to conſider, how little uſe is made of ſuch applications by Chriſt or his Apoſtles in their conteſts with the Jews; *and how all conteſted Points were ſettled by expreſs and clear Prophecies; he will be fully ſatisfied, that the want of Prophecies to their purpoſe was not the reaſon of making them, whatever elſe was. It may help us a little in this caſe to obſerve, That, both before and under the legal Diſpenſation there was always a view had to one more perfect, in which not only* Jews *but* Gentiles *alſo ſhould be included. It was not improbable therefore, that God, beſides making many expreſs Revelations concerning it, ſhould alſo order many preceding Events to bear ſome reſemblance thereto, and might cauſe thoſe Events on purpoſe to be ſo expreſſed by his Prophets, as to be literally applicable to the* Meſſiah *and matters relating to him, to whom the Scriptures of the* Old Teſtament *had a conſtant view. And this analogy, though it bear no great ſtreſs to be laid upon it, as a Proof that Jeſus, was the* Meſſiah; *yet it was proper to be taken notice of,*

of, eſpecially to Jews, *among whom that opinion had been received long before the coming of our Saviour. And I think a more than probable account may be given, how they come by ſuch a notion. Sometimes they found a particular ſtreſs laid upon circumſtances, which without ſome further view might be reckoned wholly immaterial. Such was the particular charge given in killing the Paſchal Lamb* (Ex. xii. 46.) Neither ſhall ye break a bone thereof. *We do not find this circumſtance was required or obſerved upon the firſt celebration of the Paſſover, that night the people were delivered out of* Ægypt; *but, from what appears, was added afterwards, when the obſervation of the Paſſover was made perpetual: yet we cannot account for this addition, as ſignificative of any circumſtance of their paſt deliverance. But conſider the inſtitution of the Paſſover, as having a further view to the deliverance of mankind from the bondage of iniquity, when Chriſt the Lamb of God ſhould be made a ſacrifice for our ſins, then we can account for that additional charge,* A bone of him ſhall not be broken. *Again, they found their Prophets expreſſing themſelves in terms too great for the event, to which they primarily belonged, and might therefore well imagine that their words had a further view: As in the ſign given to* Ahaz *by the Prophet* Iſaiah, *of a ſpeedy deliverance ſoon after the birth of a child, which the Prophet ſhould have upon an immediate marriage. The birth of this child is ſpoken of in a manner not ſtrictly applicable to him: for it*

is

is putting a very low ſenſe upon the words, to ſay, that Child was born of a Virgin: and to give him the Title of Immanuel, *who was not to be an inſtrument, but only a ſign of the deliverance, which God intended for them, is a ſtrain too high for that occaſion. Again, they found a future Prophet or great Perſon ſpoken of under the name of one that had gone before; from whence 'twas rational to conclude, that the future Prophet ſhould in ſome inſtances reſemble the preceding one. Thus* Meſſiah *the Prince is by* Jeremy, Ezekiel *and* Hoſea *called by the name of* David †, *conſequently ſome things ſpoken of* David *might be expected to be found true alſo of Chriſt; eſpecially ſuch as were ſpoken by* David *in his own perſon, and yet were far from being literally true of him. As in the twenty ſecond Pſalm, where he complains of ſufferings in ſuch terms as theſe.* All they that ſee me laugh me to ſcorn, they ſhoot out the Lip and ſhake the Head, ſaying, He truſted in the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him ſeeing he delighted in him. I am poured out like water, all my Bones are out of joint, my tongue cleaveth to my jaws, and thou haſt brought me into the duſt of death. For dogs have compaſſed me, the aſſembly of the wicked have encloſed me: they pierced my hands and my feet, I may tell all my bones, they look and ſtare upon me. They part my garments among them and caſt lots upon my veſture. *This deſcription exactly agrees with the ſufferings of Chriſt, but*

† Jer. xxx. 9. Ezek. xxxiv. 24. Hoſ. iii. 5.

it

it does not appear, that the ſufferings of David *were according to it. The application therefore which is made hereof to Chriſt, is ſo far from being unreaſonable, that it carries a great deal of probability with it. And though no ſtreſs be laid upon it, yet it ought to have been taken notice of by the Evangeliſts, as it ſerv'd to illuſtrate and confirm a very probable opinion entertain'd by the* Jews *before our Saviour's coming. But to return:*

Inſt. 3. *St.* Matthew *ſays of Chriſt (Chap.* ii. 23.) He come and dwelt in a city call'd *Nazareth*, that it might be fulfilled which is ſpoken by the Prophets, he ſhall be called a *Nazarene. This Inſtance cannot be to our Author's purpoſe, becauſe there is no Prophecy cited: conſequently the Evangeliſt cannot be charged with making a typical application, much leſs with uſing a* typical Proof. *It may be asked, Are not thoſe words,* He ſhall be called a Nazarene, *a citation? No, as our Author very well obſerves,* * *they* do not expreſly occur in any place of the Old Teſtament. *Why then ſhould they be looked upon as a citation from thence? Becauſe reference is made to ſome ſaying of the Prophets, muſt therefore what follows be the ſaying referred to? No. The Evangeliſts frequently appeal to the Prophets in general, without citing ony paſſage or Prophecy. Thus* Matt. xxvi. 56. All this was done, that the Scriptures of the Prophets might be fulfilled. *Here is a general appeal to the Prophets, yet neither in the preceding nor ſubſequent words is any Prophecy cited. Inſtances of this*

* Ib. p. 47.

kind

kind are common. Nor had the paſſage now before us been ſo liable to this miſtake, if it had been ſtrictly and literally tranſlated; which I rendur thus, And coming to, he dwelt in a city called *Nazareth*, by which means what is ſaid by the Prophets was fulfilled, ὁτι Ναζαραῖος κληθήσεται, becauſe he ſhould be called [*or in his being called*] *a* Nazarene. *Whence it appears, that the words taken for the Prophecy cited, ſignify the event whereby ſome Prophecy (referred to, but not cited) was fulfilled. If it ſhould be asked, What Prophecy was fulfilled by this Event? I anſwer, that of* Iſaiah liii. 3. *which ſpeaks of him as one deſpiſed and vilified.* Nazarene *was a name of reproach among the* Jews, *which they fixed upon Chriſt from his dwelling at* Nazareth, *and upon his followers afterwards, whom they called in contempt* the ſect of the *Nazarenes. Here therefore is no typical application: and if there had it would not be an inſtance of a typical Proof; becauſe the Evangeliſt draws no inference from it, neither could be ſuppoſed to do it; becauſe the reproachful name of* Nazarene *was given to many beſides our Lord.*

However, this inſtance is more excuſable, than another he has given of the like kind * ; *for which he cites* 1 Cor. xv. 4. *where St.* Paul *ſays, that Chriſt* roſe again the third day according to the Scriptures, *but cites no Prophecy. One would think therefore, that this could hardly be made an inſtance of allegorical reaſoning; and yet by this means our Author, with a little of his good management, has*

* Ib. p. 93.

has made it the beſt inſtance of all. For the Apoſtle fixing upon no particular Prophecy, left him at liberty to chuſe the beſt he could to his purpoſe. And allowing him this liberty, we meed not doubt his ability to furniſh us with allegorical reaſoning enough! To palliate it a little, he asks this ſhrewd queſtion *, What foundation is there for St. *Paul*'s arguing from the *Old Teſtament*, that *Jeſus* ſhould riſe the third day, but by an allegory of *Jonas*'s being three days and three nights in the whale's belly? *Reaſon enough, without the help of Allegory. For if the Scriptures beſpeak the fact, without limiting it to any other time, then the performance of it upon the third day is ſtrictly ſpeaking according to thoſe Scriptures. And Chriſt's riſing again the third day may without a figure be ſaid to be according to thoſe words of* Iſaiah, liii. 10, 12. *When* thou ſhalt make his ſoul an offering for ſin, he ſhall ſee his ſeed, he ſhall prolong his days, and the pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hands. I will divide him a portion with the great, and he ſhall divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong, becauſe he hath poured out his ſoul unto death ‖. *After all, the Apoſtle is not arguing with Unbelievers, who were to be* brought to the Faith of Chriſt, *or with Perſons that queſtioned the truth of this particular article; but is ſpeaking to Perſons, who embraced the Goſpel and believed this article of it; as appears from theſe words,* I declare unto you the Goſpel, which you received and wherein you ſtand; *then mentions ſome particular articles, and among*

* Ibid.

‖ *See Serm.* vi. p. 181.

among the reſt, that Chriſt roſe again the third day according to the Scriptures.

Inſt. 4. Jeſus ſays of *John* the *Baptiſt*, (Matth. xi. 14.) This is *Elias* that was for to come: *Wherein he is ſuppoſed to refer to theſe words of* Malachi, iv. 5. Behold, I will ſend you *Elijah* the Prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord *. *What is this to his purpoſe? His buſineſs was to give ſome inſtances of* Proofs taken out of the Old and urged in the New Teſtament. *But* Jeſus *is ſo far from urging the Prophecy of* Malachi *as a Proof, that he conſiders it as an objection made by the* Scribes, *that he could not be the* Meſſiah, *becauſe* Elias *was not come in Perſon. To remove this objection, he corrects the common interpretation of the Prophecy, and tells his diſciples upon his own Authority*, If ye will receive it, this is *Elias* which was for to come. *And his Authority is ſufficient reaſon for receiving it: But laying his Authority aſide; we are able to juſtify it, as the moſt rational interpretation. For the* Jews *never had an inſtance of an old Prophet's coming again; but they had frequent inſtances in the* Old Teſtament, *where a future Prophet was promiſed under the name of a preceding one. The* Meſſiah *was often promiſed under the name of* David; *and yet they never expected* David *ſhould come again: nor had they any more reaſon to expect* Elias *in Perſon. It is uſual not only in the Jewiſh, but in moſt other Languages, to ſpeak of one Perſon under the name of another, whom he reſembles. And*

* Ib. p. 47.

I am ſure it is moſt juſtifiable in the caſe before us; where a Perſon was to be ſpoken of, at that time without a name. But further, would the Prophecy have been more to the purpoſe, if it had been ſaid expreſsly, I will ſend a man named *John*, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord; *No; nor ſo much: for an Impoſtor might more eaſily have procured a man of that name, than a Perſon of the ſpirit and temper of* Elias, *to have gone before him to prepare his way.*

† Ib. *p.* 48. Inſt. 5. † Jeſus cites this Prophecy of *Iſaiah*, vi. 9. By hearing ye ſhall hear and ſhall not underſtand; and he aſſures us, that it was fulfilled in his time. *And ſo it certainly was: And we do inſiſt that the application was juſt; though we ſhould allow that the Prophecy*, according to the literal ſenſe, relates to the obſtinate *Jews*, who lived in the time of *Iſaiah*. *For nothing is more cuſtomary both in writing and ſpeech, than to apply an ancient character to a preſent ſet of men, where there conduct agrees thereto. The cavil therefore at beſt is but a poor one; and what is worſe, it has no foundation. For the character is not given to the* Jews *in* Iſaiah's *time only; but alſo to their poſterity till their utter extirpation. The Prophet asking*, ver. 11. Lord, how long? is anſwered, Until the cities be waſted without inhabitant, and the houſes without man, and the land be utterly deſolate.

To theſe our Author has thought fit to add two more inſtances of typical Proofs taken out of the *Old* and urged in the *New Teſtament. Indeed*

Indeed he has modeſtly declined giving them the ſanction of his own Authority; but he has called in his Vouchers, and their Authority, not their arguments, are to convince us. But I am ſure he will excuſe us, as a friend to free debate, *from depending upon their Authority only; and give us leave to examine, whether the Prophecies referred to are truly repreſented.*

Firſt, *We cannot agree with his Vouchers, in* referring the famous Prophecy of *Daniel* about the weeks to the times of *Antiochus Epiphanes.* The expreſſions taken from thence, as foretelling the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem, cannot conſiſtently with the Prophecy be applied to the havock made by* Antiochus; *and conſequently cannot be ſaid* to have only in a ſecondary ſenſe a reſpect to the deſtruction by the *Romans. For it is evident, before the deſtruction ſpoken of in the Prophecy was to happen,* Meſſiah *the Prince was to come, and to be cut off,* Dan. ix. 26. *And whether by him, or ſome other Perſon, an expedient was to be offered,* To finiſh tranſgreſſion, to make an end of ſins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs, *ver.* 24. *Now we are not ſatisfied, that theſe things were in any ſenſe performed before the times of* Antiochus. *What expedient was offered before his ravages at* Jeruſalem, to make an end of ſins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity? *How, or when, or by whom was* everlaſting righteouſneſs *introduced? Who was* the moſt Holy (*the* ἅγιον ἁγίων) to be

anointed? *Who was* Meſſiah *the Prince, that did appear and was* cut off, *before* the people of the Prince (*Antiochus*) came to deſtroy the city and ſanctuary? *Theſe are difficulties we cannot get over in* referring the Prophecy to the times of *Antiochus*.

Beſides, the Outrages of Antiochus *cannot be made to anſwer in point of time to the Prophecy. The* ſeventy weeks *mention'd by the Prophet cannot be ſuppoſed to mean Weeks of days; becauſe ſuch a compaſs will be too unreaſonably ſhort for the purpoſes of the Prophecy; no one ever imagined ſuch Weeks were intended; nor will ſuch a computation in any wiſe ſerve the purpoſe of them who* refer it to the times of *Antiochus. Weeks of Years therefore muſt be intended; and the computation of the* 420 [*or ſeventy Weeks of*] *years muſt begin from ſome decree granted in favour of the* Jews *and their Reſtoration; and the* Jewiſh *ſtate thus reſtored was to continue at leaſt till the expiration of the* 490 *years, after which the deſtruction threatned was to happen: for it is ſaid,* ver. 24. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city. *But to make all poſſible allowances in favour of them, who* refer the Prophecy to the times of *Antiochus; let them take out of the four* Decrees to reſtore *Jeruſalem, which they pleaſe; of the ſeveral computations of years then in uſe, let them follow that which is moſt to their purpoſe; let them ſuppoſe the deſtruction threatned was to happen at, not after, the expiration of the* 490 *years. All will not do; their account notwithſtanding will run almoſt*

almoſt a fourth part too faſt for the Prophecy. The firſt Decree and ſhorteſt years are moſt to their purpoſe. But from the firſt Decree granted by Cyrus, *to the end of the Outrages committed by* Antiochus, *were at moſt but* 279 *lunar, or ſhorteſt years. So that after all poſſible allowance made, there is a deficiency of* 111 *years in their account, who refer the Prophecy to the times of* Antiochus. *Therefore* the expreſſions taken from thence, as foretelling the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem, cannot be applied to any thing done in the time of* Antiochus; *and upon that account cannot be ſaid to* have only in a ſecondary ſenſe a reſpect to the deſtruction by the *Romans.*

Having proved the application of this Prophecy to the times of Antiochus utterly impoſſible: *I hope to prove the Chriſtian application of it to our* Meſſiah abſolutely neceſſary, *and that in ſuch a method, as will be free from all thoſe* difficulties and perplexities, which many learned men have been led into in their explications of it. *All Prophecies are certainly more fully and determinately explain'd by their completions: and this has been the uſual way of conſidering this Prophecy among Chriſtian Writers. But, in a diſcourſe of this nature, we are not to conſider, what conſtruction ought to be put upon it, now it is compleated; but what might have been clearly gather'd from it, before its completion.*

1ſt, then I preſume, That no Jew *could have imagined, that the purpoſes of the Prophecy would be accompliſht in* ſeventy weeks of days *a time too ſhort for the leaſt event propoſed to be*

done within the Prophet's compaſs. But if any warm imagination could have entertained ſuch a notion, leſs than a year's time would have convinced him of his miſtake: and this would neceſſarily have led him to compute by weeks of years.

His next work then would be to conſider, where his computation of the ſeventy weeks *ought to begin. Not from the Date of the Prophecy, he was ſure; but from ſome Decree to be granted afterwards, in favour of the* Jews *and their Reſtoration. And I am of opinion that, when the firſt Decree of* Cyrus *was granted, the* Jews *aſſuredly believed that the* ſeventy weeks *were to be reckoned from thence. But when that Decree proved ineffectual, and other Decrees were obtained more to their purpoſe, and the purpoſe of the Prophecy, they might probably begin to doubt which of thoſe Decrees was intended by the Prophet: And allowing there was the greateſt uncertainty imaginable in this caſe, that out of four Decrees they knew not which to fix upon; yet thus far they were ſure, that the* ſeventy weeks *could not commence* before the firſt, *nor* after the laſt *Decree.*

Leaving them therefore under this uncertainty, let us ſee, how near the Prophecy might notwithſtanding have determined them, to the time of the Meſſiah's *coming and being cut off.* From the going forth of the commandment to reſtore and to build *Jeruſalem, unto the Meſſiah* the Prince, ſhall be ſeven weeks and threeſcore and two weeks— And after threeſcore and two weeks (*ſucceeding the ſeven*

ſeven weeks) ſhall *Meſſiah* be cut off, but not for himſelf. *Hence it appears, that they could not expect his* coming *till* 69 *weeks were ended, nor his* death *after the expiration of the ſeventieth week.*

This then was certain, That from the Decree intended (be it which you will) there muſt have been 483 [69 *week of*] *years, before* Meſſiah *the Prince could be expected.*

In conſequence whereof it was alſo certain, reckoning even from the firſt Decree, *which was granted by* Cyrus *in the year of the* Julian *period* 4178, *that the* Meſſiah *could not be expected before the year of the* Julian *period* 4661.

It was alſo evident, reckoning even from the laſt Decree, *which was granted by* Artaxerxes *in the year of the* Julian *period* 4269, *That the* Meſſiah *was to come and to be cut off, before the year of the* Julian *period* 4759.

Allowing therefore the greateſt uncertainty *imaginable, in determining which Decree was intended in the Prophecy, this might* certainly *have been gathered from it, That* Meſſiah *the Prince ſhould come and be cut off, between the*

year —— —— 4661
and the year —— —— 4759

ſo that the Prophecy evidently limited his coming and being cut off to the compaſs of 98 *years. This therefore obliged them to keep their eyes fixed upon that certain compaſs of time. Let us ſee then what happened in it towards the completion of the Prophecy.*

In that very compaſs of time, there did appear to the Jews *a* moſt holy Perſon, *under*

the character of Meſſiah the Prince; *the profeſt deſign of his appearance was,* to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs; *To convince them that he was ſent by God to accompliſh thoſe purpoſes, he gave them all (and more than) the uſual ſigns of a divine Commiſſion; He was alſo cut off,* not for himſelf, *or his own fault; for he was in all his converſation holy, harmleſs, undefiled. And all this happened within that certain compaſs of time determined by the Prophecy.*

This conſider'd, I think the Prophecy taken in all this latitude (and in a greater latitude it could not be taken) was ſtill determinate enough to point out to the Jews *Chriſt our Lord as* Meſſiah *the Prince ſpoken of therein. It evidently precluded them, even before their heavy deſtruction, all future expectation of a* Meſſiah; *and render'd them inexcuſable in rejecting a perſon ſo extraordinary, who came to them within that certain compaſs of time, fixt upon by an ancient Prophecy, delivered to them almoſt* 500 *years before.*

And if the matter be conſider'd a little more cloſely, it will appear, that the Prophecy need not have been more determinate in point of time, to ſatisfy any reaſonable perſon. For in this latitude of conſtruction, which is not ſubject to any cavil or exception, it would neceſſarily have led him to fix upon Chriſt and him only, as the Meſſiah *promiſed therein. Had there been nothing extraordinary in the Perſon, that took upon himſelf the Character of the* Meſſiah; *had two or more appear'd within that certain*

compaſs

compaſs of time under the ſame character; and had their claims thereto been equal, or very near alike; then indeed a more ſtrict limitation of the Prophecy to a narrower compaſs of time had been neceſſary. But the caſe being quite otherwiſe; as the Prophecy is clear enough to point out a certain period of time, wherein a Perſon of unſuſpected character did appear, countenanc'd by extraordinary means; taking the proper methods to accompliſh the Purpoſes of the Prophecy; as he appear'd unequalled and unrivalled all that time, ſo that no pretence is made of any other Perſon appearing in that time for thoſe purpoſes; then is the Prophecy and ſuch completion of it a juſt and rational confirmation of his Miſſion, convincing us that he muſt, and that no one elſe could, be the Meſſiah *ſignified thereby.*

If a more ſtrict determination of the Prophecy to a narrower compaſs of time were neceſſary, I could go on to ſhew, that neither the Decree made by Cyrus, *nor the confirmation of it afterwards by* Darius, *anſwer'd the purpoſe of the Decree mention'd in the Prophecy; becauſe* Jeruſalem *was not* reſtored *nor* rebuilt *by vertue thereof. I could alſo ſhew that the Decree granted in the ſeventh year of* Artaxerxes *was the fulleſt and moſt effectual to that purpoſe; it being a general releaſe of all the captive* Jews, *with full power to return and ſettle at* Jeruſalem, *and not only to rebuild their city, but to become again, as they were before, a ſeparate people, govern'd by their own Laws civil and religious. Then alſo I might obſerve, reckoning from this Decree 7 and 62 weeks*

weeks of years, that in the week immediately following Chriſt our Lord did appear under the character of the Meſſiah; *that by the end of that week* he was cut off, *and did thereby at the end of ſeventy weeks accompliſh the purpoſes, for which the* ſeventy weeks were determined, *viz.* To finiſh the tranſgreſſion, to make an end of ſins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, *having firſt* brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs, *being* anointed *by the Holy Ghoſt. I might alſo add, that, till this was done, there could be no room to look for that* abominable deſolation *ſpoken of in this Prophecy, and that accordingly it happen'd ſoon after, even before that generation paſſed away, which was acceſſary to the death of Chriſt. But neither the application of this Prophecy to Chriſt, excluſive of all other perſons, nor the ſtate of the preſent controverſy require all this ſtrictneſs: I ſhall therefore proceed to*

Another Proof taken out of the Old *and urged in the* New Teſtament, *which our Author endeavours, under the ſhelter of other names, to repreſent as unfit for the purpoſe, which is* Deut. xviii. 18, 19. *Where God ſays to* Moſes, I will raiſe them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he ſhall ſpeak unto them all that I ſhall command him. And it ſhall come to paſs, that whoſoever will not hearken unto my words, which he ſhall ſpeak in my name, I will require it of him. *Upon which he ſays* *, That famous paſſage in the Pentateuch,--- which *Luke* in two places refers to as ſpoken

* Ib. p. 49.

of

of Jeſus Chriſt, is generally underſtood to ſignify in its immediate ſenſe a promiſe of a ſucceſſion of Prophets. *What he means by the* immediate ſenſe *of the Prophecy I know not; unleſs it be the* remote, figurative, allegorical *ſenſe of it. For the more* ſtrict *and* literal *the conſtruction you put upon it, the more unavoidably will it belong to Chriſt. A particular Prophet is ſpoken of; he was to be* of their brethren, *(that is an* Iſraelite:) *ſo far the Prophecy may be applicable to any one of the Prophets under the* Jewiſh *Diſpenſation. But the words which follow contain a very remarkable reſtriction,* Like unto thee, *viz.* Moſes. *A very needleſs and a very improper addition, if it were intended only of thoſe Prophets, who ſhould ſucceed* Moſes *in an ordinary way. For it was obſerved by* Ezra, *who outlived the lateſt of them, That* there aroſe not a Prophet in *Iſrael* like unto *Moſes,* whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the ſigns and the wonders which the Lord ſent him to do. *They were not like to* Moſes *in this, nor in any other remarkable reſpect: They had no ſpecial Commiſſion, they had no new Law, no new inſtitutes of Religion to publiſh; nor had they uſually any extraordinary Credentials of a Divine Commiſſion. Their buſineſs in ſhort was, to explain and inculcate the practice of the Law given by* Moſes. *Nor is it ſuppoſed, that they were infallibly directed even in this: For it is obſerved of many of their Prophets, that* they erred in viſion and ſtumbled in judgment. *It would be very improper therefore to ſay that they were* like Moſes,

Moſes. *And yet much more improper would it be to apply to them that additional character,* I will put my words into his mouth, and he ſhall ſpeak unto them all that I ſhall command him. *Which paſſage plainly ſuppoſes an extraordinary Commiſſion to publiſh, as from God, immediately, ſomething not before revealed.*

And it ſeems very plain from the Context, *that there was a direct and particular view to the Introduction of ſome New Diſpenſation. For* Moſes *having told the People, that* God would raiſe them up a Prophet like unto him, *ver.* 15. *and calling to mind how much they were terrified at the hearing the voice of God, and ſeeing the great fire upon the Mount, when the Law was given; he tells them, that God had regard to what they then deſired, ſaying,* Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me ſee this great fire any more: *That therefore inſtead of uſing the ſame terrible method in giving them a new Revelation,* He would raiſe them up a Prophet, put words into his mouth, *that he might ſpeak unto them all that ſhould be commanded. Let any one judge, whether ſuch a caution could have been needful, if* Moſes *had been ſpeaking only of the manner, in which the Law ſhould afterwards be inculcated by ſucceeding Prophets. It could never have entered into the thoughts of any Man to ſuſpect, that God would continue to teach them the ſame thing over and over again, in the ſame terrible manner. But, ſuppoſing the Prophet to be ſpeaking with reſpect to a New Revelation, the caution*

tion was plainly neceſſary: Becauſe without it they would have apprehended that the New One *would be introduced, as the* Old One *had been before it.*

Thus, whether we conſider the Words *by themſelves, or with relation to the* Context, *they are ſtrictly and properly applicable to none but an extraordinary Prophet, ſuch as Chriſt was, by whom a* New Revelation *ſhould be introduced. But allowing for argument's ſake, that they were intended* indefinitely of a ſucceſſion of Prophets, *it will notwithſtanding appear, that they are juſtly applicable to Chriſt, and without the help of* figure or allegory *afford a ſolid argument in juſtification of him and his Doctrine.*

I hope it will be granted, that in this latitude *the words are at leaſt as applicable to Chriſt, as to any one of that* ſucceſſion of Prophets *ſuppoſed to be meant thereby. For he gave as many, as great, as unconteſted outward ſigns of his being a Prophet, as any one that went before him under that character. He was alſo indiſputably one of their Brethren; and if there was any Tribe, out of which a greater Prophet than ordinary was expected, He was of that Tribe alſo. He was* like to Moſes, *not only in birth and office, but likewiſe in all the remarkable parts of his character. As a Lawgiver, He has greatly improved and perfected the Law given by* Moſes; *and purged it from a great many corrupt gloſſes and interpretations of the* Jews. *In his Behaviour and Conduct, He plainly diſcovered as great ſteadineſs and integrity, as*

great

great meekneſs and patience, as much prudence and good temper, as Moſes *did: Nor can we do his character juſtice without ſaying, that he far exceeded* Moſes *in theſe, and every other God-like quality and diſpoſition, What good reaſon then had the* Jews *to reject him, which did not equally oblige them to reject all that went before him? Why was* Iſaiah *to be received, and Chriſt refuſed? What did* Elijah *or* Eliſha *do, which he did not equal, or even exceed? Which of all the preceding Prophets reſembled* Moſes *more than He? Which Prophet was better juſtified, according to the Rule preſcibed by* Moſes (*ver.* 21, 22.) *for diſtinguiſhing the true from the falſe Prophet, than He was? Did He not as* Moſes *required, give them a ſign, a moſt aſtoniſhing ſign, ſuch as no Prophet ever gave? And was not that ſign, unuſual and unlikely as it was to come to paſs, completely verified? Did not God alſo further juſtify Him according to this Prophecy, in puniſhing them who would not hearken to Him, as He ſaid He would do ſuch, as would not hearken to that Prophet whom he ſhould ſend? Did not that generation, which condemned him, ſuffer in the moſt lamentable and unheard-of manner? And do not their poſterity, who ſtill continue to reject him, ſtill lie under the ſame Curſe? How juſtly therefore might the Apoſtles, in their reaſonings with the* Jews, *appeal to theſe words of* Moſes? *Take them in which ſenſe you will, they that reject him are condemned thereby. Take them in a* ſtrict *ſenſe, as reſpecting ſome particular Prophet, and they are applicable to none*

none but Christ. Take them in a latitude *of signification, as spoken* indefinitely of a succession of Prophets, *and this way Christ must be* included; *nor can He be* excluded, *without* excluding *all the Prophets that went before him, and thereby making the Prophecy entirely insignificant.*

I hope then I have set this Prophecy and the reasoning from it in such a light, as not to need the help of figure *or* allegory *to make it applicable to the purpose of Christianity. You see we can reason from it* strictly *and* according to scholastick Rules; *and the argument drawn from thence has as much force, as the Authority of* Moses *can give it.*

There is but one instance more alledged by our Author to support his charge, That Jesus and his Apostles grounded Christianity on typical or allegorical Proofs. *It is taken from the use which St.* Paul *makes* (Gal. iv. 21. *&c.) of some historical facts concerning* Abraham's *two Sons,* Isaac *and* Ishmael, *and he seems transported with the aptness of it to his purpose.* * Is there the least ground from the literal sense in *Genesis*, to suppose *Abraham*'s two Sons, *Isaac* and *Ishmael*, signified the Two Covenants? Does not St. *Paul* himself call such interpretation allegorical? And can such a secret, spiritual meaning of so plain a piece of history have any other foundation than divine discernment? *Now his triumph is over, there may be room to ask, what is this Instance to his purpose? He calls it* †, St. *Paul's* Argument to prove Christianity to the *Jews* from the *Old Testament.*

* Ib. *p.* 93.

† Ib. *p.* 11.

But

But an ordinary Reader with the leaſt attention may eaſily perceive, that the Apoſtle is neither proving Chriſtianity, nor ſpeaking to Perſons that needed a Proof of it. His Diſcourſe is plainly directed to Converts, to determine a Queſtion, which had occaſioned ſome difference among them. The Queſtion was, Whether the ceremonial Law continued to oblige Men under the Chriſtian Diſpenſation. *Whatever reaſoning therefore the Apoſtle uſes on this Head is not to our Author's purpoſe; which was to ſhew, not what methods the Apoſtles uſed* to reconcile differences among Chriſtians, *but what methods were taken* to make Chriſtians; *what arguments they uſed to eſtabliſh Chriſtianity,* where it was not, *and not ſuch as were uſed to remove doubts and ſcruples,* where it was *admitted. Let the Apoſtle's reaſoning therefore in this place be what it will, it will not follow by any means, thas this ſort of Proof was ever made uſe of* to prove Chriſtianity to the *Jews*; *much leſs, that* it was ſet up as the only proper reaſoning to bring all Men to the Faith of Chriſt, *p.* 94.

I might therefore juſtly diſmiſs the objection with this Anſwer. But yet I hope to make it appear, that the Apoſtle has put no ſecret myſtical meaning *upon that* plain piece of Hiſtory, *referred to by him in his Epiſtle to the* Galatians; *that he argues from the* plain fact *itſelf, and not from any* hidden meaning *ſuppoſed to be couched under it. The reaſoning, I own, is not very obvious; but a due conſideration of the hiſtorical facts, to which it refers,*

and

and of ſome parallel places, where the Apoſtle argues from the ſame topick, will (I believe) make it both clear aud unexceptionable.

The piece of Hiſtory, referred to by St. Paul *in this and other places, is to be met with in the book of* Geneſis. *When God called* Abraham *to ſend him into a ſtrange land to ſojourn there, he made him this Promiſe*: I will make of thee a great natiion, and I will bleſs thee, and make thy name great, and thou ſhalt be a bleſſing. And I will bleſs them that bleſs thee, and curſe him that curſeth thee: And in thee ſhall all the families of the earth be bleſſed, *Gen.* xii. 2, 3. *The Promiſe, you will eaſily obſerve, conſiſts of two parts; the former part relating to his own family, that his deſcendants ſhould become a great nation, and ſhould be bleſſed; the latter part reſpecting the families of the earth in general, that they ſhould be bleſſed in him (that is) in his ſeed, as it is explained,* Gen. xxii. 18. In thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed. *If we go on to enquire, upon what conſideration this gracious Promiſe was made and confirmed to* Abraham; *the Hiſtorian tells us,* Gen. xv. 6. *That* he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteouſneſs. *In proceſs of time* Iſhmael *was born to* Abraham *of* Agar *his bond-woman,* Gen. xvi. 15. *and* Abraham *ſeemed to deſire no more, but that the Promiſe of a numerous and mighty iſſue might be fulfilled through* Iſhmael, *Gen.* xvii. 18. O that *Iſhmael* might live before thee! *But God aſſured him, that*

his Covenant or Promiſe, ſhould not depend upon Iſhmael, *but ſhould be fulfilled in* Iſaac, My Covenant will I eſtabliſh with *Iſaac*, ver. 21. In *Iſaac* ſhall thy ſeed be called, *Gen.* xxi. 12.

Theſe are the hiſtorcal facts referred to. And from them we may obſerve, that the former part of the Promiſe, more immediately reſpecting the natural deſcendants of Abraham, *did not ſo unalienably belong to his ſeed according to the fleſh, but ſome might be excluded from the promiſed Bleſſing, as appears in the caſe of* Iſhmael. *And therefore much leſs unalterable muſt their claim be to the latter part of the Promiſe, which was made to all without diſtinction.* In thee ſhall all the families of the earth be bleſſed. *Upon this obſervation, which is very obvious, is the Apoſtle's Argument founded,* Rom. ix. 6, *&c.* Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect, *becauſe many of the ſeed of* Abraham *are excluded.* For they are not all *Iſrael*, which are of *Iſrael*: Neither becauſe they are the ſeed of *Abraham*, are they all children: but in *Iſaac* ſhall thy ſeed be called. That is, they which are Children of the fleſh, theſe are not the Children of God, (*they are not reckoned as Children in the ſight of God*) but the Children of the Promiſe (*or Covenant*) are accounted for the ſeed. *This he goes on to illuſtrate from the caſe of* Iſhmael, *and likewiſe from that of* Eſau.

We may obſerve further, that with regard to the latter part of the Promiſe, the Iſraelites (*as ſuch*) *had no peculiar title thereto. The Promiſe*

Promiſe is general, no diſtinction is made of families, all are equally included, as St. Paul *infers from the ſame topick*, Gal. iii. 28. There is neither *Jew* nor *Greek*, there is neither Bond nor Free, there is neither Male nor Female; for ye are all one in Chriſt Jeſus, *the promiſed Seed.*

As to the condition or qualification requiſite to make a man actual partaker of the promiſed Bleſſing, we may obſerve, that Faith in God, productive of ſincere obedience, was very probably intended to be the Means of obtaining the Promiſe; becauſe it was upon Abraham's *Faith that the Promiſe was made, and it is expreſsly recorded of him, That* he believed in God, who counted it to him for Righteouſneſs. *After this manner we find St.* Paul *arguing from this hiſtorical fact*, Rom. iv. 13. For the Promiſe, that he ſhould be the heir of the world, was not to *Abraham*, or to his ſeed through the Law, but through the righteouſneſs of Faith. *Judging it therefore very rational to ſuppoſe, that as* Abraham *obtained the Promiſe through Faith; ſo Mankind ſhould be made partakers of the Bleſſing promiſed thro' the ſame Means. For why elſe was it recorded? as the Apoſtle argues*, ver. 23, 24. It was not written for his ſake alone that it was imputed to him; but for us alſo, to whom it ſhall be imputed. *As if he had ſaid,*

" *It was recorded of* Abraham's *Faith, that*
" *it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs, that*
" *God was pleaſed with and accepted it, for our*
" *encouragement to imitate him therein: that*

" *when the promiſe made to him thro' faith*
" *ſhould be fulfilled, we thro' faith might be-*
" *come partakers of it, and thereby* righteouſ-
" neſs might be imputed to us alſo.

As to the grand queſtion, Whether circumciſion, and the obſervance of the Moſaick *Law (being both of divine appointment) were not intended to be neceſſary conditions of obtaining the latter part of the promiſe made to* Abraham? *The anſwer is, That nothing like this appears in Hiſtory, that therefore the* Jewiſh *Converts were to blame in inſiſting thereupon. Thus we find St.* Paul *arguing,* Rom. iv. 9, 10. We ſay, that faith was reckoned unto *Abraham* for righteouſneſs. How was it then reckoned? when he was in Circumciſion or in Uncircumciſion? Not in Circumciſion, but in Uncircumciſion. *As* Abraham *therefore by faith without Circumciſion pleaſed God and obtained the promiſe; it is not improbable, that they alſo ſhould obtain the bleſſing promiſed without Circumciſion,* who walk in the ſteps of that faith of our Father *Abraham,* which he had being yet uncircumciſed, *ver.* 12. *And the very ſame reaſoning will hold good with reſpect to the* Moſaick *Law, that the obſervance thereof could not be a neceſſary condition of obtaining the general Bleſſing promiſed. Accordingly we find the Apoſtle applying it,* Gal. iii. 17. This I ſay, the Covenant that was confirmed before of God in Chriſt *(the promiſed Seed)* the Law, which was four hundred and thrirty years after, cannot diſannul, that it ſhould make the Promiſe of none effect.

But

But might not the Law (you will ask) be made a neceſſary condition without diſannulling the Promiſe? To which I anſwer, That the nature of the Law itſelf will determine this queſtion in the negative. Becauſe it was adapted to the particular circumſtances of the Iſraelites, *conſidered as a ſeparate People: It was given with deſign to keep them ſeparate, during the corrupt idolatrous ſtate of the* Gentile *world.* It was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions (*with which the world abounded*) till the Seed ſhall come to whom the Promiſe was made, *Gal.* iii. 19. *And till then* only, *is very evident; becauſe the continuance of a Law deſigned to keep them ſeparate, under a diſpenſation intended to unite in one body both* Jews *and* Gentiles, *and to make both partakers of one common Bleſſing, is abſurd and ridiculous. The very ſuppoſition of ſuch a Law, exiſting in its full force, and to be continued always, would neceſſarily exclude either* Jews *or* Gentiles *from their title to that common Bleſſing promiſed equally to both. For it would be abſurd to ſuppoſe one neceſſary condition of a* common *Covenant to be ſuch, as obliged them to have no* Communication *with one another. Therefore (as the Apoſtle argues,* Rom. iv. 14.) If they which are of the Law be Heirs, *(as ſuch) not only* Faith is made void, *but alſo* the Promiſe is made of none effect: *Becauſe the Law, which virtually forbids Union betwixt* Jews *and* Gentiles *would exclude the* Gentiles *from inheriting the Bleſſing with them. And ſo* vice

verſa, *If the* Gentiles *be Heirs; the* Jews, *continuing ſtill bound by the Laws of ſeparation, muſt in conſequence thereof be excluded from partaking of the inheritance with the* Gentiles *And herein we ſee the force of that Reaſon, which St.* Paul *gives, why many of the* Jews, *who waited for the promiſed Seed, did not obtain the Bleſſing promiſed thro' him*; Becauſe they ſought it by the works of the Law, *Rom.* ix. 32. *Which Law, perſiſted in after the promiſed Seed was come, ſerved rather to exclude them from it. Hereby likewiſe we underſtand, why ſubjection to the Law was reckoned a ſtate of* bondage, *Gal.* iv. 3, 9. *under which the* Jews *were ſaid to be* kept ſhut up, *Gal.* iii. 23. *not only as the Law conſiſted of many burdenſome and (in their own nature) needleſs ordinances; but alſo as it detained them, (ſo long as it continued in force) from inheriting the promiſed Bleſſing.*

Hence it is, that St. Paul, *in the diſputed paſſage,* Gal. iv. 21, &c. *compares the caſe of the* Jews, *perſiſting in the Law, to that of* Iſhmael. Iſhmael *could not be heir according to the* firſt part of the Promiſe; *becauſe though he was the ſeed of* Abraham, *he was ſo by a* bond-woman; *and* the ſon of the bond-woman was not to inherit with the ſon of the free-woman: *The* Iſraelites *likewiſe, conſidered as a People ſeparated by their Law from the reſt of the world, could not, as ſuch, be partakers of the* latter part of the Promiſe, *which was intended to unite all Men*

in one body, and make them partakers of one common bleſſing. As in the firſt caſe, there was a natural imperfection, *by which* Iſhmael *was excluded: So in the latter, there was a* moral one, *by which the* Jews *excluded themſelves; for tying themſelves up ſtrictly to their laws of ſeparation, they were diſqualified to partake of a Covenant, which in its own nature could admit of no ſeparation at all. Whilſt the Law therefore was their mother, their caſe might juſtly be compared to that of* Iſhmael, *the ſon of the bond-woman, who (as ſuch) had no title to inherit. This led the Apoſtle, in the paſſage now before us to draw a parallel between the one caſe and the other. Far from ſaying, That by* Iſaac *and* Iſhmael, *in the book of* Moſes, *were meant the two Covenants; far from ſuggeſting, that any* ſecret ſpiritual meaning *was couched under that* plain piece of Hiſtory; *he argues (as is uſual) from one parallel caſe to another, and illuſtrates the caſe in diſpute by its correſpondency to a known caſe, that was out of diſpute.*

Accordingly the Apoſtle's meaning may be explained thus: ver. 21. "*I preſume that* "*you who deſire to be under the Law, are* "*acquainted with it.* ver. 22. *Conſider* "*then what is written concerning* Abraham's "*two ſons,* Iſaac *and* Iſhmael, *one of which* "*he had by a bond-woman, the other by a* "*free-woman.* ver. 23. *The one excluded from* "*inheriting, as ſon of a bond-woman; the o-*"*ther, as ſon of the free-woman, inheriting by*

" *Covenant, or Promiſe.* v. 24. *This caſe is pa-*
" *rallel to, and may (by a figure, with which*
" *men uſe to expreſs one thing by another) be*
" *made to repreſent the two Covenants: The*
" *one from Mount* Sinai, viz. *The legal Co-*
" *venant, through which the unbelieving* Jews
" *are ſtill in a ſtate of bondage, by its Laws of*
" *Separation ſhut up, and during their ſubjection*
" *thereto diſqualified to inherit the general bleſ-*
" *ſing. Their caſe therefore through the Law is*
" *like that of* Iſhmâl *through* Agar. v. 25. *The*
" *ſtate then of* Agâr *and her ſon anſwereth to*
" *the preſent ſtate of* Jeruſalem *formed upon*
" *the legal Covenant, for through it ſhe is in*
" *bondage with her children.* v. 26. *But* Je-
" ruſalem *which is from above, or the new*
" *ſtate formed upon the ſecond Covenant, is free,*
" *wherein there is no diſtinction of families,*
" *no laws of ſeparation; but as common pa-*
" *rent of us all, takes in all nations, all the*
" *families of the earth, as Heirs of one com-*
" *mon bleſſing.* v. 27. *Wherefore* Iſaiah *fore-*
" *telling this glorious increaſe of the Church*
" *of God,* chap. liv. 1, &c. *breaks forth, and*
" *ſays,* Rejoice thou barren that beareſt
" not; break forth and cry, thou that tra-
" vaileſt not: for the deſolate hath many
" more children than ſhe which hath an
" Huſband. *ver.* 28. *We then, Brethren,*
" *and all that embrace it through faith, as*
" Iſaac *was, are Heirs according to promiſe.*
" ver. 29. *But the unbelieving* Jews *reſemble*
" *the excluded ſon in all reſpects; for as then*
" Eſau, *that was born after the fleſh, perſe-*

" *cuted*

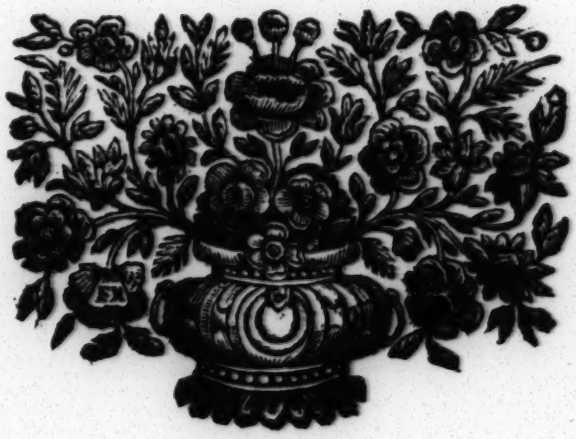
" *cuted* Jacob *that was born after the ſpirit:*
" *ſo they valuing themſelves upon being of the*
" *ſeed of* Abraham *according to the fleſh, are*
" *for maintaining ſtrictly their laws of ſepara-*
" *tion, and would thereby exclude you, to whom*
" *the Promiſe equally belongs; but by that ve-*
" *ry means they are ſtill in a ſtate of bondage,*
" *and exclude themſelves,* ver. 30. *So that*
" *what the Scriptures ſays with reſpect to* Iſh-
" mael, *is juſtly applicable to them,* Caſt out
" the bond-woman and her ſon: for the ſon
" of the bond-woman ſhall not be heir with
" the ſon of the free-woman."

This is the allegory, this is the application. There is no myſtical meaning *ſought for, nor ſcrued out of the* plain words *of* Moſes. *The uſe which the Apoſtle makes of them in this and other places, needs no other conſtruction, but the* literal *and* obvious *one. His deſign here is to illuſtrate one caſe by another parallel to it. And in this he is not ſingular, but is juſtified therein by the* common rules *of reaſoning aud diſcourſe, and by the frequent practice of the moſt ſtrict philoſophical writers. His argument by* Example *is drawn up more ſtrictly* according to ſcholaſtick rule, *than our Author's by* Induction: *For he argues* a fortiori, *if a natural imperfection excluded* Iſhmael, *tho'* of the ſeed of *Abraham,* according to the fleſh, *much more may a* moral one *be ſuppoſed to exclude others of the ſame ſeed.*

I have now conſider'd every Inſtance alledged by our Author; of which there is not one that can be called a typical or allegorical Proof.

So

So entirely groundleſs is his charge againſt the Apoſtles, That they ſet up Allegorical Reaſoning, as the true and only Reaſoning proper to bring all Men to the Faith of Chriſt. *Having therefore cleared them of this charge; I ſhall now leave the Reader to the Conſideration of another ſort of Reaſoning, which Chriſt and his Apoſtles always had recourſe to in their Defence of Chriſtianity.*



To

To the Author of the Apology for free Debate.

Qu. WHether any man *of underſtanding and honeſty would be glad, that ſuch men as* HOOKER, HALES, CHILLINGWORTH, *&c.* inſtead of endeavouring to eſtabliſh any one important truth, and giving their own *moſt intimate thoughts* thereupon, ſhould have laboured to puzzle every thing of importance that came in their way with the little arts, the quibbles and ſophiſtry of a wrangling diſputant? Whether it had been a good uſe of *their learning and penetration* (*in which they had not many ſuperiors*) if inſtead of *ſpeaking their own minds freely on all important queſtions in Philoſophy and Theology, like Mr.* Whiſton, they had employ'd themſelves in making large collections of all the weak unguarded expreſſions of Philoſophers and Divines, publiſhing them to the world in the moſt ludicrous manner, with deſign only to expoſe thoſe Writers and their Subjects; and not to improve their Readers thereby? Whether ſuch great men would not *more virtuouſly and religiouſly, as well as more* HONOURABLY, *have*

have employed their time, if they had *turn'd themſelves* entirely *to the heathen Hiſtorians, Poets, Orators, and Philoſophers, ſpent ten or twelve years upon* HORACE *or* TERENCE; than in ſtudying to burleſque the Scriptures, by coining abſurd ridiculous interpretations for every paſſage capable of miſconſtruction, picking out ſcraps of ſentences, broken unconnected paſſages, half expreſſions, and putting them together to give the Reader a falſe idea of Religion, and the Scriptures whereon 'tis founded? Or if they had thus *applied their ſagacity and labour*, whether a juſt apology *for Mr.* Whiſton, *for free debate, for free profeſſion and communication of notions, for teaching others what a Man is perſwaded of himſelf*, could be reckoned an apology for ſuch men and ſuch writings?

THE

THE CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

Divine Revelations How proved.

1 JOHN IV. 6.

Hereby know we the ſpirit of truth and the ſpirit of error. Page 1.

SERMON II.

The Internal Excellency of Chriſtianity.

JOHN VIII. 46, 47.

Which of you convinceth me of Sin? and if I ſay the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God, heareth God's words: Ye therefore hear them not, becauſe ye are not of God. p. 32.

SER-

The CONTENTS.

SERMON III.

Chriſtianity proved by Miracles.

JOHN X. 37, 38.

If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works.

p. 62

SERMON IV.

Proof by Miracles vindicated.

JOHN XV. 24.

If I had not done among them the works, which none other man did, they had not had ſin. p. 95

SERMON V.

Chriſtianity juſtified by the *Old Teſtament.*

HEB. VIII. 7, 8, 9.

For if that firſt Covenant had been faultleſs, then ſhould no place have been ſought for the ſecond. For finding fault with them, he ſaith, Behold

hold the days come (ſaith the Lord) when I will make a new Covenant with the houſe of Iſrael *and with the houſe of* Judah: *Not according to the Covenant that I made with their Fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of* Ægypt. p. 136

SERMON VI.

Chriſtianity juſtified by the *Old Teſtament.*

LUKE XXIV. 25, 26.

Then he ſaid unto them, O fools and ſlow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have ſpoken! Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his glory? p. 171

SERMON VII.

Chriſtianity juſtified by the *Old Teſtament.*

ACTS III. 25.

And in thy Seed ſhall all the kindreds of the earth be bleſſed. p. 202

Jeſus

Jeſus Chriſt the Prophet whom *Moſes* foretold.

ACTS III. 22, 23.

For Moſes *truly ſaid unto the Fathers, A Prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you, of your Brethren, like unto me; him ſhall you hear in all things whatſoever he ſhall ſay unto you.*

And it ſhall come to paſs, that every Soul, which will not hear that Prophet, ſhall be deſtroyed from among the People.

SERMON I.

Divine Revelations How proved.

In the 4th Chapter of 1 *John*, at the latter part of the 6th verſe, *&c.*

Hereby know we the ſpirit of truth, and the ſpirit of error.

AS the viſible defect of human faculties, and the inſufficiency of bare natural reaſon to guide and direct us in matters of religion, may convince us of the neceſſity of a divine revelation to give us further light and ſatisfaction therein: ſo the many different and contradictory pretences, that have been made to inſpiration, and the great diverſity of opinions, which have been taught and received in the world, as doctrines coming from God,

SERM. I. may convince us how needful it is, that with the utmoſt caution and attention we ſift and examine ſuch pretences, and, as the Apoſtle exhorts at the 1ſt verſe of this Chapter, *Try the ſpirits, whether they be of God.* Some of theſe pretences we are ſure muſt be falſe, ſo inconſiſtent are they with one another, that they cannot come from God, who is a God of truth and can in no wiſe contradict himſelf.

And as it is of the utmoſt conſequence to us, that we know the will of God, that we embrace and follow it, when revealed and made known to us: ſo is it of no leſs importance, that we be not led away by the error of the wicked, or impoſed upon by ſeducing ſpirits, ſpeaking lyes in hypocriſy to beguile unſtable ſouls. It is an enquiry therefore worthy our moſt ſerious application, how we may be ſecure from the wiles and devices of falſe teachers, who pretend to be of God and are not; how we may diſtinguiſh between the ſpirit of truth, and the ſpirit of error.

That the ſincere impartial inquirer may attain to a good degree of certainty herein cannot well be doubted; when we conſider, that the wiſdom and goodneſs

neſs of God are as much concerned to ſet ſome peculiar marks and tokens upon a revelation coming from him, as to grant us any revelation at all. No revelation whatſoever would ſignify any thing, or be of any ſervice to us, unleſs we could have ſome certainty about it. A revelation coming from God, unleſs it could be known to be ſuch, is in effect the ſame as having none at all. To receive it, as ſuch, without any indications of its divine original, would not only argue in us a groundleſs credulity, but alſo leave us liable to all manner of impoſture. What method therefore ſhall a ſincere man take to avoid ſuch a miſcarriage? ſhall he embrace the firſt religion, that offers it ſelf to him, and without ſeeking any further ſtick cloſe to the principles of his education? If this were ſafe, then all the contradictory notions, that are in the world, would be equally ſafe and true, and there could be no ſuch thing as a falſe religion, or the ſpirit of error any where. But this will not be admitted. Is truth then confin'd to any certain country, or to any particular ſet of men? No. But if it were, ſtill there would remain this difficulty, to be aſſured to what country, or to what ſort of men it be-

SERM. I.

SERM. I.

long'd. If this were all the rule we had to go by, every man (no doubt) would be partial to his own country. and to thoſe men he is beſt acquainted with: And ſo the principles of education muſt prevail every where, inſtead of true religion.

There is therefore no poſſible way left to diſcover truth from error, but by a ſincere impartial uſe of our reaſon: examining, according to the beſt of our judgment and abilities, the different pretences of men to truth and inſpiration, the nature and tendency of the doctrines taught by them; which ſeem moſt worthy of God for their Author and to have the cleareſt marks of divine Authority ſtampt upon them. This is the advice our Apoſtle has given us, *Beloved, believe not every ſpirit, but try the ſpirits whether they be of God.* Hereby plainly diſſwading us from credulouſly receiving any doctrine without examination; and as plainly ſuppoſing, that there is ſome method of diſcerning between doctrines coming from God and thoſe that do not. What that method is, the Apoſtle has ſuggeſted to us in the following verſes. For tho' in the 2d and 3d verſes he aſſerts in favour of Chriſtianity, that *Every ſpirit,*

rit, which confeſſeth Jeſus Chriſt to be come in the fleſh, is of God; and every ſpirit, that confeſſeth not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh, is not of God: yet he does not do this dogmatically, expecting to be believed upon his own bare Authority; but at the 5th and 6th verſes proceeds to give his reaſons for that aſſertion. *They are of the world,* (meaning them that denyed Chriſt and oppoſed the Chriſtian doctrine) *therefore ſpeak they of the world, and the world heareth them.* That is, they are acted by a worldly principle, and their doctrines are calculated to ſerve worldly purpoſes. *We are of God,* (ſpeaking of himſelf and the reſt of the Apoſtles:) have no worldly views, no dependance but on God, *he that knoweth God, heareth us;* (becauſe our doctrine is worthy of him for its Author) *he that is not of God, heareth not us,* (becauſe it is not ſuited to worldly ſenſual Minds.) Theſe reaſons he thought would juſtify his aſſertion in the 2d and 3d verſes; and therefore adds in the words of the text, *Hereby know we the ſpirit of truth, and the ſpirit of error.* The force of the Apoſtle's reaſoning in this place may not be immediately

SERM. I.

SERM. I.

diately apprehended. I ſhall endeavour therefore.

Firſt, To explain the terms, and ſhew the meaning of the Apoſtle in theſe two verſes, which are ſuppoſed to contain his reaſoning about *the ſpirit of truth, and the ſpirit of error.*

Secondly, I ſhall draw ſome obſervations therefrom, which may ſerve as Rules to us, whereby we may be able more eaſily to diſtinguiſh between *the ſpirit of truth, and the ſpirit of error.* And,

Firſt, I ſhall endeavour to explain the terms, and ſhew the meaning of the Apoſtle in thoſe two verſes which are ſuppoſed to contain his reaſoning about *the ſpirit of truth, and the ſpirit of error.* His rule for the diſcovery of impoſtors is this. *They are of the world, therefore ſpeak they of the world, and the world heareth them.* Who are meant by them, that *are of the world*, is not difficult to be underſtood: they are ſuch as regard moſt the things of this world. What they are, the Apoſtle tells us, Chap. ii. ver. 16. *The luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, the pride of life*; which *are not of the Father, but of the world.* And in the preceding verſe he tells us, *he that loveth the world* in theſe reſpects,

reſpects, is fond of theſe things, makes them his chief aim) *the love of the Father is not in him.* The reaſon is plain and obvious; becauſe the love of theſe things, inſtead of engaging men in the ſervice of God, in endeavours to promote his honour and glory, do on the contrary engage men in purſuits unworthy both of God and themſelves. The love of theſe things is the ſource of all iniquity, of all the miſchiefs and confuſions that are in the world, of every thing that is hateful to God, and debaſing to human nature. The Apoſtle therefore might juſtly argue, that perſons, acted and governed by this principle, were not of God: eſpecially if it appears, as he obſerves further, that their doctrines alſo ſavoured of this principle, were calculated to ſerve worldly purpoſes. *They ſpeak* (ſays he) *of the world, and the world heareth them:* that is, they ſuit their doctrines to the carnal apprehenſions of men; therefore earthly and ſenſual minds are glad to embrace a doctrine ſuited to their vicious taſte, and countenancing their immoral practices. I am ſure no ſober mind can doubt, where ſuch ſymptoms as theſe appear, but there muſt be impoſture at the bottom. And therefore any man pre-

SERM. I.

SERM. I. tending to teach a new doctrine by immediate revelation from God, if it appears that he has ſome worldly ends to ſerve thereby, that his doctrine be calculated to win upon the vitiated part of mankind, to ſooth and countenance them in their worldly and carnal purpoſes, may ſafely and without heſitation be rejected as an impoſtor. By this juſt and rational obſervation did our Apoſtle explode the pretences of that impure ſect, who ſetting themſelves in oppoſition to the Apoſtles, pretended *to be of God, to have fellowſhip with him, to know him* more perfectly than other men; yet indulged themſelves and followers in all manner of licentiouſneſs; taught that Chriſt had purchaſed ſuch a liberty for us; that men might deny him in times of perſecution, and for their preſent ſafety conform to the practices not only of *Jews*, but of *Gentiles* likewiſe. How plainly does it appear that theſe men were of the world, that they ſpake of the world, and that they who heard them were as worldly-minded as themſelves?

But the character of a real prophet, one that is truly inſpired by God, is the reverſe of this. *We are of God.* Let me

me obſerve here, that this is not a title, SERM.
which they aſſum'd to themſelves with- I.
out foundation. For at the 10th verſe
of the preceding chapter, he had given
the marks, which diſtinguiſh them that
are of God, from them who are not.
In this (ſays he) *they are manifeſt, he
that doth not righteouſneſs is not of
God.* Leaving us to conclude on the
other hand, that he who doth righte-
ouſneſs, who makes it the ſcope and
aim of his actions to be upright and
without offence, to deal equally by all
men, that would not for the gratifying
of any private paſſion, or for the ſake
of his own worldly intereſt, do a hard
or injurious thing to any, is of God.
And his reaſon for this concluſion is
given at the 29th verſe of the ſecond
chapter; becauſe ſuch men act and be-
have themſelves, as children of God, as
perſons having the ſpirit of God abiding
in them; becauſe they follow his ex-
ample, endeavour to be like him, and
as he is, ſo are they in this world. For
God is righteous. And as the Apoſtle
argues, *If ye know that he is righteous, ye
know that every one that doth righteouſ-
neſs is born of him.*

In ſhort, the principle the Apoſtle
goes upon, is the beſt and ſafeſt we
can

SERM. I. can take in matters of religion. That is, to get as juſt and true apprehenſions as we can of the Divine nature, his attributes and perfections, what is worthy of him, what moſt probably may be pleaſing to ſuch a Being; and then to make the beſt judgment we can of perſons pretending to be from him; by comparing their conduct, their doctrines, their deſigns, with our apprehenſions of that great Being, from whom they pretend to derive their authority. If it appears, that they act worthy of that Maſter from whom they pretend a commiſſion, in endeavouring to be righteous as he is righteous, copying in all things, as near as human frailty will permit, all his imitable perfections; if they make his glory, and not their own private paſſions and intereſts, the ſcope of their conduct; if the doctrine they teach have nothing in it unworthy of God for its Author, nothing that tends to ſooth and encourage men in their vices, but rather to reform and perfect human nature; if the motives they uſe to enforce it are not ſuited to the vitiated taſte of worldly and carnal men, but ſuch as are worthy of God to offer, and of wiſe and juſt men to be influenced by; if this (I ſay) appears; then,

then, not only all ſuſpicion of impoſture is removed, but every one that hath juſt and true apprehenſions of God will be inclined to give attention to ſuch a doctrine as worthy of him, and moſt likely to be dictated by him. SERM. I.

It is from this principle, that the Apoſtle argues in favour of chriſtianity, and the firſt publiſhers of it; that it was a doctrine worthy of God, agreeable to juſt and true apprehenſions of him: that therefore they who knew God were ready to embrace it; but worldly and ſenſual minds, who *ſavour not the things that be of God*, did for that very reaſon neglect and oppoſe it. Whether the Chriſtian religion will upon examination appear to be worthy of God for its Author, and agreeable to juſt and true apprehenſions of him, is a queſtion, which will not fall within the compaſs of this Diſcourſe. My Buſineſs at preſent is to enquire, what Rules the Apoſtle has laid down for our direction in judging between *the ſpirit of truth, and the ſpirit of error?* whether thoſe rules have any good foundation in reaſon, and may with any ſafety be depended upon? And I think no rule more ſafe or neceſſary in examining doctrines, whether they

SERM. I. they be of God or not, than that prescribed in this Chapter. Every wise man, I think, would make this his first step in such an enquiry. He would consider the doctrine proposed to him, the ends and purposes proposed to be served hereby; he would consider next the Author to whom it is ascribed, whether it be worthy the interposition of such a great and good Being, and likely to proceed from him: If upon enquiry he should find a wise design, a great and good end pursued thereby, a new and more effectual method discovered for promoting it, which had either escaped the notice, or was above the reach of human capacities; and upon the whole nothing inconsistent with, or unworthy of the wisdom, goodness, righteousness, and other known attributes of Almighty God; nothing that savoured of wordly policy, or that could suit the purposes of crafty designing men; if this (I say) appeared to be the result of his enquiry, he could have no room to censure it as an imposture, he must at least be inclined to have a very favourable opinion of it, and I think could hardly avoid confessing it to be of God. Having thus explained the principle, proposed by the Apostle, for the discovery

diſcovery of true from falſe prophets, I ſhall proceed in the

SERM. I.

Second place to make ſome obſervations thereupon, which may ſerve as Rules to us, whereby we may be able more eaſily to diſtinguiſh between *the ſpirit of truth, and the ſpirit of error.* And 1ſt I obſerve, that the Apoſtle ſuppoſes the uſe of our natural reaſon neceſſary to diſtinguiſh a revelation coming from God, from that which does not. The Rule preſcribed by him for the tryal of ſpirits, whether they be of God or not, is this, That we compare their doctrines with the notions and apprehenſions we have of God. This plainly ſuppoſes that we ought to have ſome juſt and true apprehenſions of the divine nature, before we can be qualified (according to this Rule) to judge of a revelation coming from him. How then are theſe apprehenſions of God to be acquir'd? Not by revelation, it is plain; becauſe they are prerequiſite to the tryal of revelations. The exiſtence of God, and in a good meaſure his attributes and perfections, muſt be underſtood by us, before we can expect him to reveal himſelf to us, before we can judge, whether the doctrine revcaled be worthy of him. In this caſe therefore natural reaſon muſt

be

SERM. I. be our guide; what that teaches upon a ſerious impartial enquiry muſt be depended upon. And till we have, by a careful application of our natural faculties, acquired ſome ſettled apprehenſions of God, we are not capable of applying the Apoſtle's Rule to any good effect; who ſuppoſes them only that know God, capable of judging of a doctrine coming from him, when he ſays, *He that knoweth God, heareth us.*

There cannot (I think) be a worſe reflection caſt upon religion, pretended to be of God, than to repreſent it, not as founded in reaſon, but built upon the ruins of it. It was plainly the opinion of the firſt teachers of Chriſtianity, that their doctrine had a juſt foundation in reaſon; that it contained nothing inconſiſtent with it; but that the whole Chriſtian ſcheme was agreeable thereto. Therefore we find them often appealing to the reaſon of mankind in juſtification of it. *Which of you* (ſays our Bleſſed Lord to the *Jews*) *convinceth me of ſin? and if I ſay the truth, why do ye not then believe me? He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, becauſe ye are not of God,* (Joh. viii. 46, 47.) As if he had ſaid, Which of you can bring any

any one argument to prove, that I have taught any thing unreaſonable? and if my doctrine be unexceptionable; if there be nothing in it unworthy of God, to whom I impute it; if there be nothing in it repugnant to unprejudiced reaſon, to which I appeal; why do you not receive it? He that has juſt and true apprehenſions of God, and is diſpoſed to act ſuitably thereto, his judgment and inclination will move him to hear whatever is worthy of him. My doctrine is ſuch; and the true reaſon why you reject it is, becauſe ye neither think, nor act, agreeably to the Divine nature. The Apoſtles generally ſuppoſe, that men were capable by the due uſe of natural reaſon (even without the help of revelation) to get in a great meaſure right and true apprehenſions of God. As St. *Paul* obſerves in his epiſtle to the *Romans*, Rom. i. 20. *The inviſible things of him from the creation of the world* might have been *clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.* And in the *Acts*, Chap. xiv. ver. 17. ſpeaking of the darkeſt times of heatheniſm, he ſays, that even then *God left not himſelf without witneſs, in that he did good, and gave them rain*

SERM. I.

SERM. I. *rain from heaven and fruitful ſeaſons, filling their hearts with food and gladneſs:* meaning that from theſe continual inſtances of providence exerciſed towards mankind, they might, by a due uſe of their natural faculties, have come at ſome right and true apprehenſions concerning him. And indeed it was neceſſary that men ſhould have made ſome progreſs herein, before they could be capable, with any certainty, to judge of a revelation coming from him. Becauſe by theſe natural apprehenſions of God they ought to have examined the doctrine pretended to be revealed, before they could with any ſafety conclude, that it was worthy of God for its Author, and likely to have proceeded from him.

Since therefore the uſe of natural reaſon is neceſſary truly to diſtinguiſh a revelation coming from God, from that which does not, we may obſerve,

Secondly, That any doctrine, which contradicts the evident dictates or deductions of reaſon, ought not to be received as coming from God; but to be rejected as proceeding from a ſpirit of error. There are certainly ſome things neceſſary to be received and depended upon as true, before any ſuch thing

thing as a Revelation can be admitted. As for inſtance, That there is a God, and that he is a Being of never-failing truth and veracity. 'Till I am ſatisfied of both theſe at leaſt, I have no room to look for, or depend upon, a revelation from him. And the only courſe I can take, antecedently to Revelation, to come at the knowledge of theſe, is to conſult my Reaſon: and all the certainty I can have about them muſt be ſuch, as my reaſon is able to furniſh me with. If therefore I cannot depend upon the evidence of reaſon, I cannot depend upon the truth of theſe two propoſitions; nor conſequently upon the truth of a revelation, which neceſſarily preſuppoſes the truth of them. SERM. I.

It is plain therefore, that to queſtion the evidence of Reaſon, is to render Revelation equally queſtionable; and to receive any thing as a revelation coming from God, which contradicts the evidence of reaſon, is to undermine the the very foundation of Revelation it ſelf, and to leave that groundleſs, upon which we build the truth of the doctrine revealed. No doctrine therefore, which contradicts the evidence of Reaſon, can upon any tolerable grounds be

SERM. I. admitted as a revelation coming from God.

Which will appear yet further by conſidering, that the very ſuppoſition of ſuch a revelation is utterly groundleſs. We are very well aſſured, that God is the author of our beings, and all our faculties: and we cannot but acknowledge, that our underſtanding is the moſt excellent faculty he has given us. It is in that we excel the beaſts that periſh; and it was plainly given us with this intent, that by a due uſe and application thereof we might diſcern truth from error, that which is juſt and fit to be done, or obſerved by us, from that which is not. This therefore muſt be looked upon as one way, which God has taken to diſcover his will to us. Should we therefore admit any thing as a Revelation coming from him, which contradicts the evident dictates of our reaſon, we ſacrifice one revelation, that which God gave us with our very beings, to make way for another, which is inconſiſtent with it. It is in effect admitting, that the judgment of our own minds is in no caſe to be depended upon; that the faculties thereof, the very beſt gift which God has given

given us, are of no real uſe and ſer- SERM.
vice to us; no, not even in diſcern- I.
ing which Doctrines come from God, and which do not. For if I cannot depend upon the plaineſt dictates of reaſon, how can I be aſſured, that any doctrine is a revelation come from God? If I receive it without conſulting my reaſon, then for ought I know it may be an Impoſture, and I am every way as liable to embrace an error, as the truth. But if I embrace it upon the tryal and conviction of my reaſon, then 'tis plain I admit the principles of reaſon are to be depended upon; which if I do, I cannot conſiſtently admit any thing as true, which contradicts it.

The truth of the caſe is this, Revelation was not intended to deſtroy the evidence of Reaſon, where it might be had; but to ſupply the place of it, where it proved deficient. For though we are capable in many things to come at certain knowledge by a due application of our natural faculties; yet there are many things, which our reaſon of it ſelf is not capable certainly to diſcover. It was with an intent to ſupply this defect of our reaſon, that God has at ſundry times in-

SERM. I.

terpoſed to reveal himſelf to us; not in ſuch a manner, as would render both Reaſon uſeleſs, and the truth of all Revelation doubtful; but in a manner agreeable to our natural faculties, which helps to confirm the evidence of Reaſon, ſo far as it reach'd, and in many other inſtances ſupplies the imperfections of it. That in ſuch a Revelation ſhould be found many things not diſcoverable by human Reaſon, many things that lay without the reach of our natural faculties, might very reaſonably be expected. But to ſuppoſe God the Author of a revelation, which contradicts onr natural knowledge, is in effect ſuppoſing him to deſtroy the very end and uſe of his own workmanſhip; and leaving us without any poſſible means of knowing what Doctrines are from him, and what are not; which would be overthrowing all manner of certainty whatſoever.

Another obſervation I ſhall make from the Apoſtle's reaſoning, which may ſerve as a Rule to diſtinguiſh between *the ſpirit of truth, and the ſpirit of error*, is, That no Doctrine, which contradicts our natural notions and apprehenſions of God, ought to be received as coming from him; but

but ought to be rejected as proceeding from a ſpirit of error. This Rule (as I have before obſerved,) was directly intended by the Apoſtle in thoſe words, *He that knoweth God, heareth us.* Where he ſuppoſes men to have ſome juſt and proper apprehenſions of God antecedent to Revelation, with which they compared the Doctrine pretended to be of him, and finding it agreeable thereto they received it. I have already taken notice, that we are capable, by natural light, to come at ſome juſt and true apprehenſions of God. Whatever therefore contradicts theſe apprehenſions of him, ought not to be received, as a Revelation coming from him. Men could have no other way to judge what was worthy of him, or what was likely to proceed from him, but by theſe antecedent dictates concerning him. Should we once give up all that natural Reaſon teaches us, concerning his Being, Nature and Attributes, we give up the very foundation of Revelation it ſelf, and the means of diſtinguiſhing it from error and impoſture. A Divine Revelation neceſſarily ſuppoſes theſe for its foundation, and can (I think) have little influence upon us, unleſs they be firſt

SERM. I.

SERM. I.

known and assented to. Unless I am first perswaded of God's goodness and love to mankind, and his providential care of the world; how can I believe or expect, that he should regard men so much, as to make any Revelation of himself to them? Without some apprehension of his truth and faithfulness, I cannot be satisfied, that he represents things truly to us. If I question his power, I cannot depend upon his promises, or much regard his threatnings. If I doubt of his Wisdom, I shall have equal reason to doubt, whether it be my wisdom to be governed by his directions. Thus necessary is it, to have some knowledge of God, his Attributes and Perfections, before a Revelation can be depended upon, or be of service to us: and consequently it must be absurd, to receive any thing as a revelation from him, which is repugnant to our natural notions and apprehensions of him.

But here it may be ask'd, What shall they do, who through inattention, or prejudice, or an evil education, are possessed with wrong notions concerning him? They seem, by this Rule, to be under a necessity of being deceived. Because if they receive no Doctrine,

as

as coming from God, but what is con- SERM.
ſiſtent with their apprehenſions of him, I.
they muſt be led away by the ſpirit of error. That this was the caſe of the greateſt part of the heathen world is very certain. And this is the very account the Apoſtle gives, why ſo many rejected the Goſpel. *He that is not of God, heareth not us:* meaning, that ſuch, as had been corrupted with, and perſiſted in, falſe notions of the Divine Nature, could not reliſh or approve the Chriſtian doctrine, which was oppoſite to their groſs and carnal apprehenſions. In order therefore to convince ſuch perſons of the Truth of a Revelation, really coming from God, it was neceſſary firſt, upon the principles of Reaſon, to correct their falſe notions and apprehenſions of him, before any good foundation could be laid for the ſuperſtructure of Divine truths. Thus St. *Paul* at *Athens*, before he attempted to convince a people, wholly given to idolatry, of the Truth of the Chriſtian doctrine, endeavoured firſt by arguments drawn from reaſon to inſtill into them juſt and proper notions of the Divine nature. He begins (*Acts* xvii. 24.) *God that made the world, and all*

SERM. I. *things therein, ſeeing he is Lord of all dwelleth not in temples made with hands.* Herein arguing againſt a notion they had, as though he were confined to a certain place, from the abſurdity of ſuppoſing, that the great Author of all things, whoſe dominion reaches to all the ends of the creation, ſhould be limitted or circumſcribed as they imagined. He goes on, ver. 25. *Neither is worſhipped* (or miniſtred to) *with mens hands, as though he needed any thing, ſeeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and every thing.* Herein arguing from his univerſal providence in providing for the ſupport of all, that he could not ſtand in need of Man's aſſiſtance, to provide for him ornaments and meats and ſacrifices, which they did for their idols. To which he adds, ver. 29. *Foraſmuch as we are the off-ſpring* (or workmanſhip) *of God, we ought not to think, that the Godhead is like gold, or ſilver; or ſtone, graven by art or man's device.* Herein arguing, from the notion they had of our being his creatures, that the Author of ſo excellent a work could not be juſtly repreſented by a piece of ſenſeleſs matter, tho' it had all the art that Man can beſtow upon it.

it. After the ſame manner, we find this Apoſtle correcting a falſe notion the *Jews* had of God; who conceived him to be partial in his care of them, without having reſpect to the *Gentiles:* arguing with them from Reaſon, that *The ſame Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.* Thus careful were the Apoſtles to prove the conſiſtency of their doctrine with juſt apprehenſions of God: For which reaſon they made it their buſineſs to correct and reaſon Men out of their falſe notions of him, in order to make them converts to the Chriſtian Religion. From the two forementioned obſervations we may draw another equally certain. SERM. I.

That no Doctrine, which teaches any thing wicked in it ſelf, or that directly tends to encourage iniquity, may be admitted as a Revelation coming from God. This will appear by conſidering, *Firſt*, That the Laws of right and wrong, juſt and unjuſt, good and evil, have a neceſſary foundation in Nature, and are clearly deducible from Reaſon. Theſe laws are ſo very obvious, and their obligation ſo manifeſt to human underſtanding, that generally ſpeaking the meaneſt capacity (when rightly informed

SERM. I. formed of the action and all its circumſtances) ſhall readily paſs judgment upon it, whether it be juſt and fit to be done, or not. And tho' Men find out ways to ſtifle this judgment, where the guilt is their own; yet we may obſerve them quick-ſighted and skilful enough, when others are guilty of an unjuſt or unworthy action. Seeing therefore moral duties and their obligation have ſo certain a foundation in Reaſon; would we admit any thing, as a Revelation coming from God, which is repugnant to them, and tends to overthrow their obligation; we ſhould then admit, as a Revelation coming from God, that which contradicts the evident dictates of Reaſon: But it has been proved already, that no Doctrine, which contradicts the evident dictates of Reaſon, ought to be received as a Revelation from God; and therefore no Doctrine, which commands any thing wicked in it ſelf, or that tends to encourage iniquity, ought to be received as a Revelation from God. *Secondly*, As God is a perfect Being, juſt and holy, free from all temptation or will to commit iniquity, it is impoſſible to conceive (conſiſtently with ſuch apprehenſions of him

him) that he ſhould command or encourage any thing that is wicked. That which is againſt his Nature muſt be diſpleaſing to him. And it is obvious to conceive, that what is diſpleaſing to him muſt be diſcouraged by him. Could we therefore once ſuppoſe him commanding or encouraging falſehood and unfaithfulneſs, injuſtice or cruelty, envy or uncharitableneſs, there would then be great reaſon to ſuſpect his juſtice, mercy, goodneſs, and love to mankind. As therefore no Doctrine, which is repugnant to, or brings in queſtion, any of the known attributes of God, ought to be admitted, as a Revelation coming from him; conſequently no Doctrine, which commands, or directly tends to encourage iniquity, ought to be received as ſuch, but to be rejected, as proceeding from a *ſpirit of error*.

Theſe are the Obſervations I propoſed to make upon the Apoſtle's reaſoning concerning the ſpirit of truth, and the ſpirit of error. It appears, that they have a juſt foundation in Reaſon, and ought to be regarded in our examination of Doctrines, whether they be of God or not. And I am apt to think, that theſe Rules only, applied

SERM. L

plied with care and ſincerity, would have ſerved effectually to have diſcovered all the Impoſtures, that have ever yet appeared in the World; which we generally find to have been mix'd with ſome things abſurd and ridiculous, unworthy of God, or elſe deſtructive of moral virtue and goodneſs. On the other hand I think a wiſe Man, who is heartily diſpoſed to ſerve God in the moſt acceptable manner he is able, would hardly ſcruple to embrace a Doctrine, which upon a careful examination appeared to him to have nothing in it inconſiſtent with his beſt and ſobereſt apprehenſions of the Divine Being. If upon an impartial enquiry it appeared to have manifold inſtances of wiſdom and goodneſs; a viſible deſign to diſcourage vice, to promote virtue, to reform and perfect human nature; to abound with arguments and motives wiſely calculated to promote this end, not ſuited to the private paſſions of particular Men, but in general to the Reaſon and Underſtanding of Mankind; as he could not but think a Doctrine of this kind worthy of God for its Author, he could not, without doing a ſort of violence to his judgment, reject it as an Impoſture,

poſture, though it had no external marks of Divine interpoſition to countenance it. SERM. I.

Yet when we conſider the want of capacity in ſome, and the want of attention in others to diſcover that internal excellence, which we may ſuppoſe always accompanying a Doctrine coming from God; if we obſerve likewiſe a ſort of frailty in humane nature, which is commonly more affected with ſomething that raiſes the admiration, than what tends to inform the judgment, with inſtances of power, more than with thoſe of wiſdom; it ſeems expedient, if not neceſſary, that a Divine Revelation ſhould have ſomewhat more, than the bare intrinſick excellence of the inſtitution, to make its way in the world, and procure it a general reception: That God ſhould interpoſe by his Power, to awaken the attention, as well as by his Wiſdom, to convince the underſtandings of Men; and by ſome *outward* viſible impreſſions of his Authority, add a further weight to the *internal* purity of the Doctrine revealed by him. Prejudice and partiality to received notions and opinions are not always conquered by the

SERM. I. the cleareſt reaſoning. Idolatry and all the groſs ſuperſtitions of pagan worſhip might have been baniſhed the world, long before the coming of Chriſt into it, if Reaſon could have prevailed, and Men have been perſwaded to have uſed their own Underſtandings, but in a moderate degree. But long experience has convinced us, that naked Reaſon has but little force, where Prejudice is concerned. And therefore God has uſually thought fit to accompany the ſeveral Revelations of his will to us, with viſible demonſtrations of power; appealing to the Senſes, as well as to the Reaſon of Men, to convince them of his Authority: ſetting the ſeal of Miracles to the commiſſion of his Prophets; and commanding the attention of Men, as well by the wonderful works wrought, as by the excellence of the doctrine taught by them.

The Goſpel doctrine will, upon examination, appear to be wanting in none of theſe proofs; tryed by theſe Rules, or by any other that Reaſon can ſuggeſt to us, it will (I doubt not) ſufficiently approve it ſelf to the Judgment of impartial Men; as a doctrine entirely agreeable to Reaſon and worthy

thy of God for its Author; no way cal- SERM.
culated to ſooth the paſſions, to en- I.
courage the vices and follies of Men;
but wiſely contrived for the more ef-
fectual encouragement of univerſal
righteouſneſs, to promote the general
good of Mankind, the happineſs and
advancement of Human Nature. A
Doctrine at firſt delivered to the world
in no ordinary way; not by Men that
could be ſuſpected of guile or worldly
deſign; but by One that was proved
to be the Son of God with power, by
his reſurrection from the dead; and
afterwards confirmed unto us by them
that heard Him, God alſo bearing *them*
witneſs, with ſigns and wonders and
divers miracles and gifts of the Holy
Ghoſt.

SERMON II.

The Internal Excellency of CHRISTIANITY.

In the 8th Chapter of *John*, at the 46th and 47th verſes.

Which of you convinceth me of ſin? and if I ſay the truth, why do you not believe me? He that is of God, heareth God's words: Ye therefore hear them not, becauſe ye are not of God.

SERM. II.

AS Religion is a matter of great importance; as it is the duty and intereſt of every Man, as far as he is able, to get right Information therein; and a great Satisfaction likewiſe to a ſincere mind to be able to give a reaſon of the hope that is in him,

to juſtify the choice he has made in oppoſition to the many falſe pretences, that are made to truth and inſpiration; I endeavoured in my laſt diſcourſe to lay before you ſuch Rules, as ſeemed to me both ſafe and neceſſary for our direction in making this enquiry. And in the firſt place I obſerv'd, that our Reaſon, which was given us for our direction in the moſt important tranſactions of Life, ought carefully to be conſulted in an enquiry of this nature: becauſe without it we are liable to be impoſed upon by every pretender to inſpiration, and it muſt be mere chance only, if we be not led away by *the ſpirit of error*. From hence therefore it was natural and eaſy to infer, that if the uſe of Reaſon be neceſſary to diſtinguiſh between *the ſpirit of truth, and the ſpirit of error*; then no Doctrine ought to be received as true, which contradicts the evident dictates of Reaſon; but ought to be rejected as proceeding from a *ſpirit of error*. I obſerved further, that in trying Doctrines, whether they be of God or not, it is neceſſary to compare the Doctrine, pretended to be from him, with our natural notions and apprehenſions of him. By our natural apprehenſions of God,

SERM. II.

SERM. II. I mean ſuch a knowledge of him, as may be acquired by a due uſe of our natural faculties. For unleſs we were capable by Reaſon, independently of the helps granted by Revelation, to acquire ſome juſt and ſettled apprehenſions of God; it would be impoſſible for us to form any good judgment of a Revelation coming from him. It is by theſe only, that we are capable of judging, whether the Doctrine taught, be worthy of him; whether the End intended to be ſerved thereby, needed the interpoſition of ſuch a Being: whether the manner of that interpoſition be ſuitable to the dignity of his Nature, and will ſufficiently diſtinguiſh it ſelf from the impoſitions of ſeducers. And in this enquiry alſo Reaſon muſt be our guide; not only to direct our judgment in acquiring juſt and proper apprehenſions of him; but alſo in comparing the Doctrines pretended to be from him, with thoſe apprehenſions of him, and in judging, whether they be worthy of him or not. And from hence therefore it was natural to infer, that any Doctrine, which contradicts our natural notions and apprehenſions of God, ought not to be received as coming from him, but to be rejected

as

as proceeding from a *ſpirit of error*. And theſe obſervations made way for another equally certain, That no Doctrine, which teaches any thing wicked in it ſelf, or that directly tends to encourage iniquity, ought to be received as coming from God. Becauſe ſuch a Doctrine is not only entirely repugnant to juſt and ſober Reaſon; but alſo unworthy of God, and quite contrary to our natural apprehenſions of him. SERM. II.

On the other hand I obſerved, That if upon a careful enquiry the Doctrine pretended to be of God, appeared to have a wiſe deſign in it, to be directed to ſome great or good End, not in any wiſe to ſooth and encourage Men in their vices, but to reform and perfect human nature; and for that purpoſe to have diſcovered ſome new and more effectual method, which had either eſcaped the notice, or was above the reach of human capacities; if it appeared to have nothing in it unworthy of God for its Author, nothing inconſiſtent with the Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Righteouſneſs or any other known Attributes of the Almighty; nothing that ſavour'd of worldly policy, or that ſuited the purpoſes of crafty deſigning Men; then no reaſonable Man could

SERM. II. have any room to cenſure it as an impoſture, but muſt at leaſt be inclined to have a very favourable opinion of it, if not obliged thereby, to confeſs it to be of God.

Having laid down theſe Rules for the tryal of Doctrines, whether they be of God or not; having ſhewn the reaſons upon which they are founded, and the neceſſity of applying them, in order to diſtinguiſh with any ſafety or certainty, between *the ſpirit of truth, and the ſpirit of error:* I ſhall proceed to examine the Chriſtian Doctrine by theſe Rules; whether any of the preceding marks of impoſture can be fix'd upon it, or whether we can juſtify our ſelves thereby, in receiving it as a Doctrine come from God. And I cannot but think it a juſt prejudice in favour of Chriſtianity, to conſider the firſt teachers of it, not inſiſting only on the *external* proofs (by prophecy, by miracles, *&c.*) of their divine commiſſion, but upon the *internal* excellence of the Doctrine it ſelf: appealing frequently to the underſtandings of Men, making them judges of the Doctrine taught by them; whether it was not agreeable to right Reaſon, worthy of God, and entirely conſiſtent with their beſt and moſt rational apprehenſions

henſions of him: appealing likewiſe as to their own conduct, whether it had any ſuſpicion of guile or hypocriſy, or worldly deſign in it; whether they acted as Men, that had any baſe private ends to ſerve thereby. Where any ſuch Symptoms as theſe appeared, they taught and commanded, that ſuch ſhould be rejected as impoſtors. It was a mark given by our Bleſſed Lord, *John* vii. 18. to diſcover one that ſpake of himſelf, that he *ſought his own glory* or advantage; adding, that *he who ſought his glory that ſent him, was true, and had no unrighteouſneſs in him:* plainly making his hearers judges, whether he had acted worthy of that God, from whom he pretended a commiſſion; or whether he ſpake and taught like one, that had his own private ends in view; who, by ſuiting himſelf and his doctrine, to the vitiated taſte of worldly minds, ſought to eſtabliſh his own intereſt, reputation, or advantage in this world. So likewiſe in the *Text*, reſenting with ſome warmth and vehemence the obſtinacy of the *Jews* in rejecting him, when they had no grounds, either from his Conduct or Doctrine, to ſuſpect him as an Impoſtor, he calls upon them to

SERM. II.

SERM. II.

ſhew their reaſons (if they had any) why they did ſuſpect him; if they had none to ſubmit as (reaſonable Men) to the ſuperior force of Reaſon and Truth. *Which of you convinceth me of ſin? and if I ſay the truth, why do you not believe me? He that is of God, heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, becauſe ye are not of God.* Hereby plainly allowing, that if they could charge his Doctrine with any thing ſinful, or any thing that tended to encourage iniquity; if they could prove, that he had any ill deſign or ſiniſter views in teaching it; that then they might be juſtified in rejecting him as an Impoſtor. And the argument urged, why they ought to receive him, is, becauſe the Doctrine he taught was irreprovable, no way repugnant to Truth or Reaſon, but worthy of God for its Author, and agreeable to juſt and true apprehenſions of him; therefore they who were of God, that is, were ſincerely diſpoſed to do his will, heard and embraced it; but others who *ſavoured not the things that be of God*, but *minded earthly things*, did for that very reaſon reject it. From the words thus explained, I ſhall endeavour in confirmation thereof to ſhew,

Firſt,

SERM. II.

Firſt, That the great End and Deſign of the Chriſtian Revelation was rational, wiſe, and good, tending to improve and perfect Humane Nature, and worthy the interpoſition of Almighty God.

Secondly, That all its Doctrines are wiſely calculated to promote that End, are very agreeable to Reaſon, and worthy of God for their Author.

Firſt, I am to prove, That the End and Deſign of the Chriſtian Revelation was rational, wiſe, and good, tending to improve and perfect humane nature, and worthy the interpoſition of Almighty God. Our Bleſſed Lord tells us, that his Deſign in coming into the world was, *to call ſinners to repentance.* And his Apoſtle gives us the ſame account of his miſſion, that *God ſent him to bleſs us, in turning away every one of us from his iniquities*; that he *was manifeſted to deſtroy the works of the devil.* The commiſſion given to his Apoſtles after him was of the ſame import, that *repentance and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached in his name among all nations*; or as St. *Paul* explains it, *to open mens eyes, to turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan to God.* The

SERM. II. need there was of ſome extraordinary interpoſition on this account was very viſible. So great was the corruption of Mankind every where, eſpecially among the *Gentiles*, to whom the Goſpel Revelation was, in a more peculiar manner intended, to give light and ſalvation. It is confeſſed on all hands, that their ignorance and corruption, eſpecially in matters of a religious nature, were as groſs, as could well be imagined. The very firſt Principles of Religion were either wholly loſt, or very miſerably corrupted by them. As St. *Paul* obſerves, *They* had *changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into images made like to corruptible man,* and *to birds and four-footed beaſts and creeping things.* So that they *worſhipped and ſerved the creature more than the Creator, who is bleſſed for ever.* And theſe groſs apprehenſions about the objects of worſhip led them into as groſs practices in the worſhip thereof. For their Gods were made the patrons of their vices, and they worſhipped them with all the lewdneſs and uncleanneſs and barbarity, that a wanton fancy could ſuggeſt to them. Thus the Goſpel found them, *walking in the vanity of their minds, having*

their

their underſtanding darkened, and be- SERM.
cauſe of the blindneſs of their hearts, II.
giving themſelves over to lacivious-
neſs, to work all uncleanneſs with gree-
dineſs.

Let any one judge therefore, whether it was not worthy of God, worthy of his Wiſdom and his Goodneſs; whether his love of Righteouſneſs and hatred of Iniquity, might not reaſonably be ſuppoſed to incline him, to interpoſe to reſcue Man out of ſuch a degenerate eſtate, to renew in him a juſt ſenſe of the Author of his Being, of the great Ends for which he was formed, and of the ſeveral duties and obligations, which his Nature had laid upon him.

Had Men always preſerved their reaſon entire, conſtantly conſulting and cloſely purſuing the dictates of it; it does not appear, that any extraordinary interpoſition had been neceſſary. Uncorrupt Nature would probably have led Men, by the propereſt methods, to ſuch a degree of perfection, as Nature had formed them for. But 'tis evident paſt contradiction, that Men had generally miſtook both their true End and the true Means of purſuing it; and had thereby acted, not only againſt their

SERM. II.

their own trueſt intereſt, but alſo againſt the Author of their Being, who created them for other Purpoſes, and whoſe Perfect Nature could not but diſapprove their practices. That in this caſe therefore ſome remedy was needful, to reſtore humane nature to its primitive deſign, is not to be doubted. And it was a work that plainly required more than human means. Reaſon had greatly failed therein; nor could it be expected, that mere human reaſon ſhould be able to redreſs an evil, which it could not prevent. Very neceſſary therefore was it, that ſome more than human means ſhould be applied; very needful on Man's part, whoſe natural capacities had been by ſome abuſe diſabled to promote the ends and purpoſes of his creation. And it muſt alſo be acknowledged to be as worthy of God, to interpoſe for the perfecting his own Deſign: worthy of him who firſt gave us faculties for excellent Purpoſes, to reſtore them, when corrupted, to their primitive Uſe: worthy of the Author of our Reaſon to enlighten it by Revelation; and of him, who at firſt made us, to correct the failures and corruptions that had crept into his workmanſhip.

This

This is the End propoſed by the Chri- SERM.
ſtian Revelation, to reform and perfect II.
humane nature. This End is rational, wiſe, and good, it plainly needed, and was worthy, the interpoſition of Almighty God. And,

Secondly, It will appear that the Doctrines of the Goſpel are wiſely calculated to promote this good End, and are worthy of God for their Author. Here it will be proper to conſider,

Firſt, What the Goſpel has propoſed, as the ſcope and aim of our actions; whether it be ſuited to our nature, and perfective of it. For if the End be not worth our purſuit, the Means will not be thought worthy our attention, or our practice. I obſerve then, that the gratifications of our ſenſual appetites and paſſions are not the End propoſed to us by the Goſpel. And it is certain theſe are not fit to be the aim of rational Beings; they do more properly belong to an inferior order of creatures, whoſe faculties are ſuited to them only, and who do (no doubt) enjoy them in greater perfection, than we can do. But they can never truly ſatisfie the Mind of Man, which being of a ſpiritual nature, requires ſomething more refined

to

SERM. II. to exercise it self upon. The Gospel therefore proposes, as we are rational Beings, capable of knowing God, and acquainting our selves with his excellent Perfections, to make us happy in a more perfect enjoyment of him. And that not only in contemplating his great and unspeakable Perfections; in receiving continual fresh discoveries of his glorious attributes; in admiring the glory, the greatness, the infinite variety, the wonderful harmony and exactness of all his Works, the wisdom of his contrivance, and the goodness of his design in them; which is called in Scripture, *seeing God, being ever with him*, and living *in his presence:* but also in being made like him; like him in the temper and disposition of our minds; free from all inordinate and vile affections; not oppress'd with fear, nor transported with anger, nor rack'd with envy, nor hurried by revenge, nor depress'd with grief, nor carried away by fierce unruly passions after things which cannot satisfy: but filled with the more Godlike and delightful passions of peace, and love, and universal benevolence, to be both happy in our selves, and well pleased with the happiness of others; desiring and delighting

lighting in their good, and with the utmoſt chearfulneſs contributing thereto, all that is in our power. SERM. II.

For as we are ſocial, as well as rational creatures, the happineſs propoſed to us, as the aim of our actions, is not the ſolitary enjoyment of things pleaſing to our ſelves alone; but the converſation, friendſhip and enjoyment of other Beings of like nature with us: with whom we ſhall be perfectly united in one mind and one judgment; and without any jealouſies or private deſigns, without any peeviſh differences or diſreſpectful thoughts, mutually conſpire to promote, and mutually delight in, each other's happineſs and ſatisfaction. And this the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* ſuggeſts, in ſaying, *We ſhall come to an innumerable company of Angels, and to the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect.*

This is what the Goſpel has propoſed, as the ſcope and aim of our actions; it is evidently ſuited to our Nature, to the moſt *perfect* part of it, and what we have faculties fitted to purſue. We are, even in this imperfect ſtate, capable of acquainting our ſelves in a good meaſure with God, his Attributes and Perfections, and of finding

SERM. II.

ing delight therein; we perceive that this knowledge of him is capable of continual improvement, and that the pleaſures thereof increaſe with our improvement therein. It is no leſs certain likewiſe, that God has made us capable of imitating his moral Attributes and Perfections, of growing up ſtill more and more to a likeneſs with him, and of improving our happineſs thereby. We find alſo, as we are ſocial creatures, our happineſs much depends upon good-will, benevolence and unity of affection towards one another; that theſe principles of happineſs are capable of being improved by us, and that we were deſigned by Nature for ſuch enjoyments. There is therefore in this End propoſed to us by the Goſpel nothing unworthy of God, nothing unſuitable to our Nature, nothing abſurd or diſagreeable to Reaſon; but plainly a view to take Men off from worldly and carnal purſuits, which are the foundation of all the inconveniences and miſeries and confuſions of this world, and to fix their attention upon ſomething more worthy their aim, and more likely to engage them, to *live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this world.* And I cannot but look upon the

the clear, conſiſtent, rational account given us hereof, as one of the peculiar Excellencies of the Goſpel. For the Heathen world in general had but very faint Apprehenſions of a future State; the beſt of them ſeemed to waver ſometimes in the *belief* of it. But they were *more* at a loſs, when they attempted to *deſcribe* it. Then every Man, as his own fancy led him, painted it in ſuch colours, as beſt ſuited his own taſte. So that the Belief of a future State, *where it was found*, inſtead of encouraging Men to purſue it by the paths of Virtue and Goodneſs, encouraged many of them to follow their own vain imaginations; hoping to find an *Elyſium*, a ſtate of Happineſs hereafter, ſuited to each Man's particular fancy and diſpoſition. But thoſe future rewards propoſed by the Goſpel are plainly calculated for the encouragement of univerſal righteouſneſs and goodneſs; without which, we may plainly ſee, that a Man cannot be qualified for the enjoyment of them. And as the End propoſed by the Goſpel is rational, ſuited to the natural faculties of Man, worthy of God to offer, and of Man to accept, as fitteſt to be made the ſcope and aim of his actions; ſo

SERM. II.

Secondly,

SERM. II.

Secondly, The Means preſcribed, or the Conditions required for the attainment of it, are wiſely adapted to the End propoſed, are worthy of Divine encouragement, and tend to the perfection of human Nature. The firſt ſtep taken by the Goſpel for the perfecting human Nature, and for promoting the happineſs of it, was to acquaint us with the Nature of God, his Attributes and Perfections; that by a better knowledge of him, we might know better how to qualify our ſelves for a more perfect enjoyment of him. For he that propoſes to be happy in the enjoyment of God, ought to have juſt and worthy apprehenſions of him; becauſe ſuch as his apprehenſions are, ſuch will his affections be. If he looks upon him, as a rigid auſtere Being, the thoughts of approaching him will fill him with uneaſineſs and dread, not with pleaſure; if ſelfiſh or changeable, he can never find complacency or ſatisfaction in him; if partial or unjuſt, this will give him ground to ſuſpect his intereſt in him; if furious or revengeful, 'twill make him apprehenſive of ſome dangerous conſequence, which may ariſe from his fury back'd by Almighty Power. Some ſuch,

ſuch, or worſe apprehenſions than theſe of the Divine Nature, are known to have poſſeſſed the Minds of Men before the Goſpel. The effect whereof was, that they conceived a diſlike, or averſion, or elſe they propoſed to recommend themſelves to him, by methods unworthy both of themſelves and him. To theſe were owing the barbarous Sacrifices of their own Species among the *Heathen*; and the hardheartedneſs and cruelty of the *Jews* to Aliens and Strangers. SERM. II.

The Goſpel has given us ſuch an amiable character of the Divine Being, as will render him, to every conſiderate perſon the Object of his admiration and his love. In his Wiſdom and his Goodneſs, *infinite*; *unchangeable* in his Truth and Faithfulneſs; hating nothing that he has made; no reſpecter of Perſons; but, as common Father of all, is good to all, that ſincerely endeavour to pleaſe him. Theſe apprehenſions of God, as they are worthy of him and agreeable to Reaſon; ſo are they proper to beget in us a hearty love and eſteem of him, to raiſe in us a deſire of pleaſing him, and of making our ſelves acceptable to a Being, thus perfectly diſpoſed in his Nature to

SERM. II.

do us good. And these affections towards him are necessary to prepare us for a happy enjoyment of him. For what delight or pleasure can there be in contemplating a Being, whose Qualifications or Perfections are not esteemed or valued by us? All Happiness in the enjoyment of any Being is founded upon an entire love of that Being. For this reason the Scriptures are so careful in acquainting us with the amiable parts of the Divine character; requiring us to exercise our selves in thinking and speaking his Praises, in conversing with him by Prayer, in having our thoughts and desires frequently lifted up to him: that by such exercises as these, we may acquire a settled love and esteem of him, which will greatly contribute to the happiness of enjoying him more perfectly hereafter.

Another Means proposed by the Gospel, for the advancement of our Nature, is the Imitation of God in all his imitable Perfections; in his Purity and Holiness, in his Justice and Truth, in his Patience and Forbearance, Mercy and Goodness, with the like. This is both a rational and sure way of promoting our own Happiness and Perfection. For as God is the great Standard

Standard of both, we are ſure that a vigorous imitation of him muſt greatly contribute to our Happineſs, as well as perfect our Nature; by bringing us ſtill nearer to the moſt Perfect, as well as moſt Happy of all Beings. The moral Perfections of God, in which we are required to imitate him, are the foundation of his unalterable Happineſs. If inſtead of his Juſtice, Purity and Truth, his Mercy, Goodneſs and Love to Mankind, we could ſuppoſe him poſſeſs'd of an envious narrow Spirit, furious and revengeful; we muſt ſuppoſe theſe unquiet paſſions, as they are founded in imperfection, to be fruitful likewiſe in uneaſineſs and vexation. We feel theſe effects from ſuch paſſions in our ſelves, and are always moſt eaſy in the abſence of them. Beſides, as the Goſpel propoſes to make us happy hereafter in a more perfect enjoyment of God, it muſt certainly be a neceſſary preparation for it, to accuſtom our ſelves to ſuch habits and diſpoſitions as make us moſt like God; becauſe all delightful communion depends upon a harmony and agreement of tempers, a ſimilitude of diſpoſitions and manners. For this reaſon the Goſpel require us to be

SERM. II.

SERM. II. *imitators of God as dear children*, to *purify our ſelves even as he is pure*, and to endeavour to be *perfect*, *as our Father which is in heaven is perfect*.

It is with the ſame viſible regard to the Happineſs and Perfection of our Nature, that it requires us to be *kindly affectioned one to another*; to *follow the things that make for peace*; to be of an obliging, candid, friendly temper; to avoid every thing, that may tend to diſturb or annoy one another, as linked together in ſociety. Such a conduct as this, has not only a viſible influence upon our preſent happineſs, but is plainly neceſſary to qualify us for that more perfect Society, which the Goſpel has taught us to expect hereafter. Where 'tis propoſed, that we ſhall live together in perfect harmony and agreement, loving and being beloved, mutually promoting and delighting in each other's good. How neceſſary thereto is the exerciſe of univerſal love and benevolence, a communicative, open, undeſigning temper, and a readineſs to all good offices, that lie in our power? On the other hand, how unfit muſt we be for the enjoyment of it, if in this life we have contracted a ſour, malicious, fretful habit

habit of Mind, and are thereby indiſpoſed either to promote, or take delight in, the happineſs of others, as well as our own? Thus we ſee by what rational Methods the Goſpel propoſes to advance and perfect our Natures, to lead us on gradually to the end of our calling, till we are made compleatly happy. It wiſely requires us, to accuſtom our ſelves to, and improve our ſelves in, thoſe divine and heavenly diſpoſitions, which make us like God himſelf; which fit us for the enjoyment of him; which have a natural and neceſſary connexion with true happineſs, and in the vigorous exerciſe whereof the Perfection of our Nature muſt conſiſt. SERM. II.

And yet further, leſt too great a ſollicitude, or regard to the gratifications and enjoyments of this world, ſhould divert or hinder us in this progreſs to Perfection; leſt the ſame cauſe, which firſt alienated the Mind of Man from God the Author of his Being, and from the End, for which he was at firſt deſigned, ſhould ſtill have the ſame effect; The Goſpel ſtrictly requires, that we wean our affections, as much as poſſible, from the enjoyments of this world, and be cautious of contracting

SERM. II. tracting too great an intimacy with, and fondneſs for them: leſt theſe, getting the maſtery of our affections, ſhould make us diſreliſh and grow indifferent to thoſe things, whereon our trueſt happineſs does depend. Therefore we are told, that *a carnal mind is enmity againſt God*; that the love of the world and the love of God are inconſiſtent. And for this reaſon we are exhorted to *abſtain from fleſhly luſts, which war againſt the ſoul*; to *ſet our affections on things above, not on things of the earth*; that is, not to be over-fond of the periſhing advantages of this world, whether they be honours, or profits, or pleaſures; becauſe they are apt to withdraw the Mind from other more neceſſary purſuits, to ſlacken the attention to things of a higher nature, to ſeduce the affections and make them diſreliſh thoſe rational and more refined pleaſures, which are propoſed by the Goſpel, as the ſcope and aim of our actions.

If we conſider now, how juſt and reaſonable theſe Rules preſcribed by the Goſpel are; their viſible tendency to fit us for, and exalt us to, that ſtate of Happineſs and Perfection, which we are encouraged to hope for in another life;

life; and compare them with thoſe ſtrange and inconſiſtent ſchemes, which had been deviſed by Men, and were allowed of and encouraged in the *Pagan* worſhip; we cannot but admire the Wiſdom and Excellence of the Goſpel ſcheme: wherein there is ſuch a harmony between the End and the Means, and the plain Deſign of both is to lead us gradually on to true Happineſs and Perfection. SERM. II.

There is ſomething yet more peculiar to the Goſpel, which remains to be conſidered. That is, the Motives and Encouragements it affords, to engage us in proſecuting the great End and Deſign of it. It is certain, how great ſoever the End, propoſed by the Goſpel, be; or how ſuitable and neceſſary ſoever, the Means preſcribed for the attainment of it; yet if the End were unattainable, or the Means impracticable, the excellency of both would be loſt to us, and neither the one or the other would be of any advantage. When we conſider therefore the frailty and imperfection of human nature, the weakneſs of our judgment and the obliquity of our wills; we may eaſily conceive, that after we have had a great and excellent End propoſed to

SERM. II.

us, and proper Rules preſcribed for the attainment of it; ſtill there muſt be ſomething wanting, to ſupply the deficiency of our Nature; both to atone for paſt offences, and to enable us more effectually to purſue for the future thoſe neceſſary ſteps, which lead to true Happineſs. Here the wiſdom of the wiſe was confounded, and all the devices of Men were found to be of none effect. The Goſpel only has truly undertaken to ſupply this deficiency, and that in a manner worthy of God, and ſuitable to our Neceſſities. For,

Firſt, With reſpect to the offences and miſcarriages, which through the frailty and corruption of our Nature, we daily commit, and cannot expect to be entirely free from in this imperfect ſtate, the Goſpel aſſures us, that *we have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, who was made a propitiation for our ſins.* Wherefore we are told, that *God was in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing to them their treſpaſſes*, having *made him ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we might become the righteouſneſs of God in him.* That we had need of ſuch a Saviour is evident, becauſe we had

had nothing on our own part to offer to ſatisfy the Juſtice of God, offended by our iniquities; nor could we aſſure our ſelves of pardon from him, without ſome atonement made: Natural Reaſon indeed might prompt us to conceive the Divine Nature placable and ready to forgive; yet ſtill Mankind was at a loſs to know by what methods, and upon what terms, this forgiveneſs was to be procured. Uncertainty herein put Men upon trying various ways; the uſe of Sacrifices was introduced; but theſe, as they could not purge away paſt ſins, ſo neither had they any effect in reforming the ſinner, and conſequently could not anſwer the Purpoſes of God. Who therefore, out of his exceeding love to Mankind, gave his only-begotten Son; who, by the dignity of his Nature, and the acceptableneſs of his Perſon to the Father, was capable of becoming a ſucceſsful Mediator on our behalf. His ſufferings in our Nature and our ſtead, as they may be ſuppoſed available in the ſight of God, to procure that pardon we ſtood in need of, ſo alſo do they ſuggeſt to us one of the greateſt diſcouragements to ſin imaginable; ſeeing God choſe rather, to lay the burden thereof

SERM. II.

SERM. II.

thereof upon his well-beloved Son, than ſuffer it to go unpuniſhed. And this diſpenſation is ſo far from claſhing with our beſt and trueſt apprehenſions of God, that every Attribute and Perfection of the Almighty ſeems to be diſplayed therein: his Goodneſs and Forbearance and Love to Mankind; in that, whilſt we were enemies to him, he gave ſuch unſpeakable proof of his concern for our welfare, and his great Deſire to reconcile us to himſelf: his Wiſdom and his Juſtice, in contriving ſuch an Expedient, whereby he might forgive Sin, without giving any encouragement to the future commiſſion of it: who, in the very ſteps he took to reconcile us to himſelf, gave ſufficient demonſtration of his hatred of all iniquity, and made uſe of ſuch a method of propitiation for it, as might in the event prove the greateſt diſcouragement to it. From whence it appears, that this method of redemption by the death and ſufferings of the Son of God in our nature, as it was highly neceſſary and expedient for us; ſo was it in every reſpect worthy of God. For therein his Juſtice and his Mercy, his Righteouſneſs and his Goodneſs, his Hatred of Sin, and Love of Mankind,

are

are all greatly manifeſted; nor is one Attribute magnified at the expence of another. SERM. II.

And no leſs conſiſtent with the beſt and trueſt apprehenſions we have of God, is that offer and aſſurance given us by the Goſpel of the Holy Spirit's aſſiſtance, to relieve the defects and imperfections of our corrupt Nature, and to forward us in the purſuit of thoſe things which lead to Happineſs and Perfection. The need on our part of ſuch gracious relief, is eaſily perceived, and every day very ſenſibly felt by us, And though there was no obligation on God's part to diſpenſe ſuch a favour to us; yet 'tis plainly agreeable to the notions we have of his Goodneſs; it is entirely conſiſtent with his Deſign of reforming human Nature, it alſo manifeſts his exceeding regard to Righteouſneſs and Virtue, in affording us all poſſible help and encouragement to the practice of it. It is a great motive, as well as a great help, to our obedience; ſeeing he that knows the frailty of our Nature beſt, has promiſed to relieve it, and in every difficulty and temptation we meet with, *to make a way for our eſcape, and to enable us to bear it.*

This

SERM. II. This is the Chriſtian Scheme, the End and Deſign of it, the Means preſcribed, and the Motives offered, to direct and encourage us in the proſecution of it. If there be any thing herein unworthy of God, deſtructive of the Happineſs and Perfection of human Nature; any thing that ſavours of worldly policy or deſign; any thing that can ſerve the private views of ſelfiſh Men, or that tends to ſooth and encourage Men in their vices, inſtead of reforming them; we may freely give Men leave to cenſure it as an Impoſture, and to reject it, as unworthy the regard of reaſonable Creatures. But if no ſuſpicion of this kind can be fix'd upon it, if it be viſibly calculated to promote ſuch Ends, as are worthy of God to promote; if the duties and obligations of it are entirely agreeable to Reaſon, and perfective of human Nature; if its Motives are not contrived to work upon the corrupt affections and carnal luſts of Men, but are wiſely ſuited to the neceſſities of our Nature, and muſt in reaſon be acknowledged very needful for the ſupport and encouragement of virtue and goodneſs; there can then be no reaſon to ſuſpect, whether God was its Author. But we may conclude with the

the Apoſtle, that they who rejected it were *not of God:* that is, they were under the dominion of ſome prevailing luſt or intereſt, which it was the buſineſs of this Religion to check and ſubdue. Another Doctrine more favourable to their luſts and intereſts, and leſs worthy of God for its Author, would have been more agreeable, and more readily received by them: But wicked Men love not the light, which reproves their works. *This* therefore *is their condemnation, that light is come into the world, and they love darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds are evil.*

SERMON

SERMON III.

CHRISTIANITY proved by MIRACLES.

JOHN X. 37, 38.

If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works.

SERM. III.

HAVING entered upon an examination of the Christian Doctrine, whether it be of God or not, and undertaken to lay before you the ſeveral kinds of proof, which have been urged and inſiſted on in its favour: I thought the firſt and moſt neceſſary ſtep that could be taken to ſatisfy a reaſonable Enquirer, was to examine the Doctrine it ſelf, the Nature and Tendency

dency of it; not doubting, but the in- SERM.
trinſick excellence and value of it, its III.
conſiſtency with the beſt and trueſt ap-
prehenſions we have of God, and with-
al the Need Mankind was in of ſome
Divine interpoſition, to ſerve thoſe Pur-
poſes, which are directly intended to
be ſerved and promoted by the Go-
ſpel, would have a great weight with
all ſerious thinking Perſons, that give
themſelves time to conſider it in this
view.

To this End I endeavoured to ſhew, how reaſonable it is in it ſelf; how viſibly deſigned to diſcourage vice, to promote virtue, to reform and perfect human Nature; what freſh arguments and motives it has offered for this Purpoſe, not ſuited to the private Paſſions of particular Men, but to the general Reaſon, as well as to the general Needs of Mankind, worthy of God to offer, and of wiſe and juſt Men to be influenced by: obſerving that ſuch a Doctrine, attended with ſuch viſible inſtances of Wiſdom and Goodneſs in the Deſign of it, and no way inconſiſtent with any known Attribute of Almighty God, could not with any good Reaſon be cenſured as an impoſture, but may juſtly be ſuppoſed to be from God.

This

SERM. III.

This ſort of argument, as it is reaſonable in it ſelf, ſo we find it much inſiſted on by Chriſt and his Apoſtles. They frequently appeal to their Doctrine, and to the Reaſon of Mankind, to judge whether it were worthy of God or not. And indeed, if there be any ſuch thing, as an *internal Proof* of a Divine Revelation, this is it. This is that argument, which ariſes out of the nature of the inſtitution it ſelf. All other kinds of Proof, whether it be drawn from the completion of Prophecies, or from the working of Miracles, is *external* and adventitious. And the force of both is founded upon this ſuppoſition, that the diſcovery of things future and contingent, and the working of Miracles, are inſtances of Divine interpoſition; that therefore the Religion which has theſe on its ſide, has therein the Countenance of God. But though the arguments are both the ſame in kind, and the ſtrength of both be plainly founded upon the ſame Reaſon; yet we have been told, that the Proof by Prophecies compleated, is an *internal Proof*; but that by Miracles only *external*; and that this latter has no ſtrength in compariſon of the former. But to any reaſonable Man it

it ſhould ſeem, that the raiſing of the dead, is at leaſt as manifeſt an inſtance of Divine Interpoſition, as foretelling things to come. For if one may ſuppoſe a Prophet raiſing others, and himſelf alſo raiſed from the dead, who had been juſtly condemned for impoſture; we may as eaſily ſuppoſe an Impoſtor, in his life and character, anſwering all the characters of an ancient Prophecy. And I think no part or character could be too hard for that Man to counterfeit, who could do the Miracles, that were done by our Bleſſed Lord, and his Apoſtles after him. SERM. III.

But yet, as if the many remarkable Interpoſitions of Providence, recorded in juſtification of the Chriſtian Doctrine, were of no weight to engage or confirm us in the belief of it, we are referred to the *Old Teſtament*, as the only Rule to make a juſt eſtimate of Chriſtianity by: And by the *Prophecies* thereof, and their *completion* in Chriſt, to judge, whether he was of God or not. Whilſt the Miracles of his Life, his Reſurrection, and other external ſeals of his Commiſſion are repreſented as things impertinent, not to the purpoſe, nor of any moment in the determination of this Enquiry. To this

SERM. III.

purpoſe we are told, that the *truth of Chriſtianity depends upon ancient revelations* *; and that to ſuch a degree, *that ſetting aſide this internal proof from prophecy, it ſhould ſeem deſtitute of other, or external, arguments* †. This being *the foundation on which Jeſus and his Apoſtles built it* ‡. But there ſeems to me no manner of truth or reaſon in all this. For when our evidence conſiſts of ſeveral branches, why ſhould the whole ſtreſs be laid upon one only? Or, if Chriſt and his Apoſtles built only upon this, to what purpoſe were thoſe *ſigns and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt* exerted? If they added no weight to their authority, why were they wrought? why were they recorded?

In anſwer to this we are told, that the reaſon why they were wrought and recorded is, becauſe *Thoſe Miracles were propheſied of in the* Old Teſtament.— *And therefore they are no otherwiſe to be conſidered, as proofs,— than as fulfilling the ſayings of the* Old Teſtament.— *In which ſenſe they are good proofs, and in that ſenſe only* ‖. This is an excellent reaſon! As if an

* Grounds and Reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion. p. 25. † Ibid. p. 31. ‡ Ibid. ‖ Ibid. p. 37.

an argument loſt its uſual force, by being made a part of a Prophecy! What kind of proof was it when *Moſes* firſt applied it? Then it was no part of a Prophecy. God plainly intended it, as an an abſolute proof of his being ſent by him, as we find *Exodus* iv. 1, *&c.* The *Iſraelites* received it as ſuch, and were convinced by it, as you may perceive at the 30th and 31ſt verſes of the ſame Chapter: and the force it then had, it certainly ſtill continued to have, only with this difference; that when it was firſt applied, Men had only natural Reaſon to judge of the force of that proof, which was given by Miracles; but allowing the *Jewiſh* Religion to be of God, then it became a Proof confirmed by the Authority of God; it being preſcribed thereby as a proper Proof to confirm the Miſſion of a true Prophet, *Deut.* xviii. 21, 22. But 'tis urged, that by us Miracles ought to be conſidered *as comprehended in, and exactly conſonant to, the Propheſies concerning the Meſſiah.* Very true. But will this hinder me from conſidering them, as they are in themſelves, and the evidence ariſing from them, in caſe they had not been foretold in the *Old Teſtament?* I can conſider the Converſion of the

SERM. III.

SERM. III. Gentile world, from the groſſeſt Idolatry, to the Worſhip of the one only true God, as an event foretold in the *Old Teſtament*; and though of an extraordinary nature, yet exactly fulfilled through Chriſt. I can alſo conſider it as an Event entirely worthy of God to countenance, which, not only without, but, againſt human Means vigorouſly employed to ſuppreſs it, was in the moſt ſurprizing manner effected by the Goſpel. One can (I ſay) thus conſider it, abſtracted from the Prophecy that foretold it, and think the Goſpel greatly juſtified thereby. I cannot ſee, why any Proof ſhould loſe its natural force by being made a part of God's word. One would rather ſuppoſe, that Miracles did *naturally* carry ſome evidence with them of a Divine Commiſſion, for which Reaſon they were fix'd upon, as marks to diſtinguiſh a Prophet by; than conclude merely becauſe God has fix'd upon them for that Purpoſe, that therefore of themſelves they could be no Proofs at all.

But 'tis ſaid further, That *Jeſus himſelf urgeth his Miracles to prove his being the* Meſſiah, *in that ſenſe only*, as fulfilling the ſayings of the *Old Teſtament*. *For when* John the Baptiſt

ſent

ſent two of his Diſciples to him, to know whether he was the Meſſiah; *Chriſt declares himſelf to be the* Meſſiah, *by ſhewing that the characters of the* Meſſiah *agreed to him, in theſe words: Go ſhew* John *again thoſe things which ye do hear and ſee; the blind receive their ſight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed up, and the poor have the Goſpel preached unto them* *. This is the paſſage cited: But how does it prove, that Chriſt urged his Miracles, only as the ſayings of the *Old Teſtament* were fulfilled thereby? Here is plainly an appeal to his Miracles and Conduct, but no Prophet is expreſsly cited as foretelling them. There is indeed a Prophecy to this effect in *Iſaiah*, and partly in the ſame words. And allowing there was a tacit appeal to that Prophecy, it would not appear, but that he laid ſome ſtreſs upon the works themſelves, as well as upon the Prophecy, where thoſe works are foretold. And there is more than enough to confirm us in this opinion. The *Evangeliſts* frequently take notice of the conviction wrought in many by the ſight of his Miracles, not *as works foretold to be done*

SERM. III.

* Grounds, &c. p. 38.

SERM. III. *by the* Meſſiah, but as ſtupendous inſtances of Power committed to him, *Becauſe mighty works did ſhew forth themſelves in him.* *Nathaniel* believed and confeſſed him to be the Son of God, becauſe he knew what paſſed between *Philip* and him in their abſence. *Nicodemus* believed him a teacher come from God, becauſe of his Miracles; not becauſe they were foretold, but becauſe he thought *no Man could do thoſe Miracles, which he did, except God were with him.* We find St. *Paul* converted by Miracle, notwithſtanding the prejudices he had taken to Chriſtianity from the *Old Teſtameut.* I need not at preſent enquire, whether theſe Perſons placed their Faith upon a valid Foundation. It was a Foundation plainly allowed and approved by Chriſt and his Apoſtles. It is therefore falſe to ſay, they grounded Chriſtianity upon the completion of Prophecies only. Our Bleſſed Lord frequently inſiſts upon his Miracles as a ſufficient proof of his Commiſſion; not *as works foretold in the* Old Teſtament, but as works, which of themſelves manifeſted the Countenance and Interpoſition of God. Thus (*John* v. 36.) *The works wbich the Father hath given me to finiſh, the ſame*

ſame works, that I do, bear witneſs of me, that the Father hath ſent me. He ſays to his Diſciples, *Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or elſe believe me for the very works ſake.* (Chap. xiv. 11.) The *Jews* who had rejected him, notwithſtanding his Miracles, he condemns as inexcuſable for this Reaſon, becauſe *he had done among them the works, which none other man did.* (Chap. xv. 24.) To them he appeals in the words of the *Text*, as works, which manifeſted God to be his Father. *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me believe the works.* This point therefore being ſettled, That Chriſt and his Apoſtles did urge theſe Miracles, not only as the ſayings of the *Old Teſtament* were fulfilled thereby; but as direct proofs of a Divine Commiſſion: I ſhall proceed to conſider the Need, the Uſe, the Validity of ſuch Proof, in Confirmation of a Doctrine coming from God.

SERM. III.

If all Men were impartial and ſincere, and attentive enough, in examining Doctrines pretended to be of God; it is very probable, that the internal excellence of a Doctrine coming from him would be of it ſelf ſufficient to

SERM. III.

manifeſt its Author. But whether this obſervation be true or not; this is certain (conſidering the want of capacity in ſome, want of attention in others, and the force of prejudice in moſt, which are a great hindrance to the clear diſcovery of that internal excellence which we may ſuppoſe always accompanying a Doctrine coming from God:) That ſome external, ſenſible evidence is needful for the more effectual conviction of Men; whoſe prejudices (experience tells us) are not uſually to be conquered by naked reaſoning; but to be (as it were) extorted from them by ſomething that makes a ſtrong impreſſion upon their outward ſenſes, *the faculties*, which they are chiefly governed by, and which commonly have the greateſt influence upon their judgment.

We are ready to own, that this Proof by Miracles is external, not founded upon the nature of things themſelves, nor upon any natural relation, that we know of, between Miracles and Truth. Neither can we ſay, that there is an immediate neceſſary connexion, between a Man's doing ſomething beyond the ſtretch of human abilities, and his teaching nothing, but what is worthy

thy of God for its Author. But the ſuppoſitions uſually built upon, to enforce this Proof are theſe: Either that the extraordinary Powers exerciſed, by one taking upon him the character of of a Prophet, or Meſſenger of God, are ſuch, as none but God could convey to him; or elſe, that they are ſuch, as God would not ſuffer to be exerciſed in the cauſe of impoſture. If both, or either of theſe ſuppoſitions be found true of the Miracles wrought in confirmation of any Doctrine; then the inference will be eaſy and natural, that ſuch a Doctrine has the Countenance of God, and conſequently muſt be worthy of him, otherwiſe it would not be countenanced by him. Thus far therefore we may ſafely argue, from our natural notions and apprehenſions of God, that whatever has his Countenance and Encouragement is worthy of *him*, and ought to be received by *us*. Neither can that juſt and good Being be diſpleaſed with us for receiving it, his Countenance being the ſame as a Command obliging us to receive it. SERM. III.

The Queſtion therefore will be, How far theſe exraordinary Powers of Prophecy, of Miracles, *&c.* which we appeal

SERM. III.

appeal to in juſtification of the Chriſtian Doctrine, may be depended upon, and taken, as inſtances of Divine Countenance given to it.

And here, in the

Firſt place, it will be neceſſary we ſhould be ſatisfied, that the extraordinary Works appealed to, in juſtification of the Chriſtian Doctrine, as inſtances of Divine Interpoſition and Countenance, are not the reſult of mere humane Abilities, or of any natural Improvement of ſuch Abilities by art, exerciſe, application, *&c.* but ſuch as exceed the utmoſt ſtretch of human abilities, and the utmoſt improvement of them by natural means. For if they be any way within the reach of our natural faculties; if there be but room to make a probable conjecture, how ſuch power may poſſibly be acquired by natural means; be the effect never ſo unuſual, and inſtances thereof never ſo rare; yet, as we are able to account for it, there is no occaſion or reaſon to impute it to the immediate or extraordinary interpoſition of Almighty God, and conſequently it cannot be appealed to as an inſtance of his particular Countenance or Encouragement. But we may be eaſily ſatisfied, that the

Powers

Powers exerciſed, and the Works appealed to, in juſtification of the Goſpel were not of this kind. Conſider either the Works themſelves, or the Manner of doing them, they appear to be quite out of the reach of human Abilities, and exceeding all poſſible Improvements of them. SERM. III.

We have ſeveral inſtances of Perſons reſtored to life, and to perfect health at once, by Chriſt and his Apoſtles; one of which had lain in the grave four days, and was by his *Word* only commanded to his former ſtate. Inveterate diſeaſes, that had fruſtrated all the means that Money could procure, or the Phyſician's skill could miniſter, were by him commanded to quit their hold without the help of Nature or of Art. The Man that had an infirmity thirty eight years, become helpleſs to the laſt degree, was preſently enabled at his *Word* to take up his bed and walk. Daily and hourly were the cures he wrought in this manner, upon the blind, the lame, the deaf, the dumb, the diſeaſed, the helpleſs; they brought the ſick out into the ſtreets, where they heard of his coming; they asked no other help of him, but to ſay, it was *his Will* they ſhould be healed:

SERM. III.

healed: Conſtant experience had taught them to expect relief, even from his Word only; and as they believed, ſo was it done unto them. And when his healing Word could not be obtain'd, through the multitudes that thronged about him for relief, they found even the touching of him was a ſovereign medicine; and if they could but lay hold of the border of his garment, they were made perfectly whole. If he was diſpoſed to feed five thouſand at a time, it mattered not how ſcanty the proviſion was; ſeeing that upon two different experiments, by his Bleſſing, the fragments that remained, after all were filled, were more than the quantity that was at firſt provided. The very elements were ſubject to his Command. For at his word, the water became wine; at his Will, it ſupported him, walking thereupon, as upon dry ground; the ſtorms could not withſtand his powerful Voice, and even the winds and ſeas obeyed him.

After a courſe of above three years ſpent in ſuch works as theſe, wrought in *Judea*, and the countries round about, done in the moſt publick manner, in places of greateſt reſort, ſo frequently, ſo openly, ſo long together,

ther, that his fame was ſpread abroad in all the land, and his Miracles became unqueſtionable; he at laſt ſubmitted to as publick a death; that (if poſſible) his Power might be yet further known, in triumphing over *Death it ſelf.* He died by the hands of his enemies, that his *Death* being *unqueſtionable*, there might be no room to bring the Miracle of his *Reſurrection in queſtion.* He died as a malefactor and impoſtor; that God might have the greater opportunity of vindicating him from that unjuſt cenſure, by raiſing him again from the dead. And the malice of his enemies prompted them to watch him *even in death*, to expoſe, tho' it could not prevent, that malicious ſtory of his Diſciples ſtealing him out of the grave. But their malice, their ſentence againſt him, their care to ſee it executed, and their zeal to ſuppreſs his growing fame, were all fruſtrated by that unparallel'd Miracle of his Reſurrection. A fact confirm'd to us by a cloud of witneſſes, who ſealed their teſtimony with their blood. A fact, which if it needed confirmation, was confirm'd by the great and wonderful events of many ſucceeding years. For they, who were choſen to be his witneſſes,

SERM. III.

SERM. III.

neſſes, did not only confirm the fact by their Teſtimony; but the whole courſe of their Life and Actions proclaimed him living: not only the innocency and unblameableneſs of their lives, their unſhaken zeal and ſteadineſs to the Cauſe he had engaged them in, their contempt of life, and all the advantages of it, their chearful behaviour under the greateſt perſecutions, and tryals, and tortures, and the moſt cruel deaths that malice could invent; I ſay, not only theſe were great arguments of their Veracity, and helped to confirm the Teſtimony they gave: But moreover the Miracles they daily wrought in his Name, the Powets they had received from him of doing the ſame, and even greater Miracles than he had done; theſe, which they ſhewed openly to the world for many years together, were publick inſtances not only of his being alive, but of his Power likewiſe which was manifeſted in the Actions of his Apoſtles, who, according to his Promiſe, had received that Power from him. Did he appoint them after his departure to go into all the world to preach the Goſpel to every creature? he furniſhes them, though illiterate Men, with languages for every nation;

nation; and in that one Gift enabled them in the moſt effectual manner both to ſpread, and to confirm his Doctrine. Did he promiſe to be ever with them, to ſupport them under all the tryals, he had told them they ſhould meet with in the courſe of their Miniſtry? What better Proof could be given of the performance of his Promiſe, than the chearfulneſs, and even joy they expreſs'd, in ſuffering the greateſt hardſhips imaginable for his ſake? Did he tell them in his life-time, that he would viſit the *Jewiſh* nation with ſeverity for their oppoſition to him, deſtroy their city and ſanctuary, make the place of their habitation deſolate, and ſend them away captive into all the world? ſome of them lived to ſee his threatning ſtrictly executed, they who were the recorders of it: nor did that generation paſs away till all was fulfilled. SERM. III.

Theſe, and ſuch like, are the Facts appealed to, in Confirmation of the Chriſtian Doctrine; Facts, reported to be done thro' a courſe of forty years; not in a dark unactive Age, when ignorance and indolence had left a gap in hiſtory, to be filled up afterwards with the idle dreams and inventions of enthuſiaſtick

SERM. III.

enthuſiaſtick and deſigning men: but in an age the moſt polite and learn'd, active and inquiſitive, and too well skilled in the affairs of life, to ſuffer any groſs impoſture to ſteal into the world unobſerv'd, or if obſerv'd, without ſufficiently expoſing it.

Such Works, ſuch Events as theſe, I believe every body will allow, were not the reſult of mere human abilities, tho' never ſo greatly improved by art or application. The Works themſelves, and the Manner of doing them, plainly prove them to be in the ſtricteſt Senſe of the word Miraculous. This therefore is certain, that without the interpoſition of ſome Superior Agent far exceeding man in power and capacity, theſe works could not have been done, nor theſe extraordinary effects produced, which are appealed to in juſtification of the Teachers of Chriſtianity. It is obvious therefore to ask, whence then had they thoſe Powers? who that ſuperior Agent, that interpoſed to give them ſuch mighty countenance? And here one would be apt to look immediately to God, the Fountain of all power, to whom all things are poſſible. For it was properly his work, who was Author of

our

our Nature, to add what faculties he pleaſed to thoſe originally given; and therefore might be preſumed to have given theſe Powers unto Men. SERM. III.

But then another Queſtion will ariſe, Whether there are not other Agents, ſuperior to us in Power, the ſtretch of whoſe abilities we know not? whether by their aſſiſtance theſe extraordinary events might not be brought about, and that in confirmation of an impoſture? If our adverſaries ſhould tell us, there are not any ſuch intermediate Powers; then the Chriſtian Doctrine is at once eſtabliſhed by the extraordinary Powers given to the firſt teachers of it; which being allowed to exceed, *very far exceed*, all human Abilities, muſt therefore be derived from God immediately; and conſequently the Doctrine they taught had his Countenance obliging us to receive it. But if they allow there are intermediate Agents ſuperior to us in Power, whoſe malice does prompt them to uſe that power to countenance impoſture; then alſo is the foundation of Chriſtianity eſtabliſhed, in the neceſſity of ſome Divine Interpoſition to guard us againſt impoſtures, ſet on foot and countenanced by the unknown

SERM. III. powers of thoſe wicked Agents. Then alſo we may reaſonably conceive, from the Juſtice, Goodneſs, and other known Attributes of Almighty God, that he will take care to diſtinguiſh in ſome remarkable manner, his own Interpoſitions from the workings of thoſe wicked ſpirits: for otherwiſe his Interpoſitions would be fruitleſs, and our need thereof would remain notwithſtanding unſupplied. But as this ought not to be granted, and cannot with any reaſon be ſuppoſed; our next enquiry muſt be, how the Interpoſitions of God may be diſtinguiſhed from the workings of thoſe wicked ſpirits: and whether the Countenance given to the Goſpel and its Teachers, will come under the Rules neceſſary to determine us in this weighty Point. And here I muſt obſerve,

Firſt, That ſome have thought this Point might be ſettled by conſidering the Nature of the Works themſelves, and the Manner of doing them: ſuppoſing the Powers exerted in confirmation of the Goſpel, to exceed the natural powers of any created Being, and conſequently to have been derived from God immediately. How far this ſuppoſition may be depended upon,

on, I cannot ſay: but I think there is a great deal of uncertainty in it, becauſe we are not acquainted with the ſeveral degrees of created Beings above us, we know not what Powers they are poſſeſſed of, nor can we pretend to ſay their power extends ſo far, and no farther. It is not doubted, but they have faculties far exceeding ours, and that they act in a quite different manner from us. To ſay therefore, they cannot ſee farther into futurity, than we can; that they know no more of the vital Union between ſoul and body, nor how the vital operations are performed or obſtructed, better than we do, is ſpeaking by gueſs only, and not by knowledge. All that we certainly know, is, that as they are created, ſo they muſt be limited Beings; that their Powers do not extend to every thing, and that they are under the reſtraint of God, nor can be exerciſed but by his permiſſion. And this I think enough to ſatisfy us in the preſent Caſe. Being aſſured from the Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Goodneſs of God, that he will never ſuffer greater Powers to be exerted, and more extraordinary works to be wrought for our Deluſion, than in Confirmation of

SERM. III.

SERM. III.

the Truth. He that acts without reſtraint and limitation, to whom all things are eaſy, as well as poſſible, will either diſtinguiſh his own Interpoſitions by effects, that wicked ſpirits cannot imitate; or will reſtrain them from ſo doing, when they ſet up in oppoſition to him. For we, that are to judge of thoſe external interpoſitions whether they are of God or not, muſt judge by the number and greatneſs of them: the more and greater thoſe extraordinary effects are, the greater character they bear of Divine Power, and the more we are inclined to believe them to be from him, of whom 'tis ſaid, that *he doth wonderful things*, and that *he is girded about with power*.

There is no manner of abſurdity to ſuppoſe God interpoſing in a miraculous way to countenance a Revelation coming from him; but it ſeems needful upon many accounts, to awaken the attention of Mankind; whom, we commonly find, more affected with inſtances of Power, than with thoſe of Wiſdom; and to need ſome outward ſenſible demonſtrations of his Authority, to engage them to pay a due regard to his Precepts. Hence it has become the general opinion, and even expectation

tion of Mankind, that when God is pleaſed to communicate to Men any new Revelations of his Will, he will likewiſe accompany them with ſome viſible manifeſtations of his Power. Thus when God would have ſent *Moſes* with a ſpecial commiſſion to *Pharaoh* King of *Ægypt*, and to the *Iſraelites*; 'till he had ſome extraordinary Power communicated to him, he ſcrupled to go, deſpairing of ſucceſs; but afterwards, he went without heſitation, and it is ſaid, that, *When* Iſrael *ſaw the great work, they believed the Lord and his ſervant* Moſes. And it is no leſs natural, or cuſtomary with Mankind (call it which you will) when Miracles are wrought to ſerve oppoſite purpoſes, to cloſe in with that ſide, on which the moſt and greateſt Miracles appear to be wrought; conceiving (as we juſtly may) that ſuperiority of Power is on that ſide, where the greateſt inſtances of this kind appear. We cannot therefore conceive it conſiſtent with the Honour, any more than 'tis with the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, to ſuffer greater inſtances of Power to be exerted in the cauſe of Impoſture by wicked ſpirits, who are under his reſtraint; than what he will certainly

SERM. III.

SERM. III.

give in vindication of his own Commiſſion. And we may certainly depend, (as certainly as we can upon any of the known Attributes of God) that he will never ſuffer ſeducing ſpirits to exceed the Powers given, to Perſons commiſſioned by him; but will for the ſake of Truth, the intereſt of true Religion, the ſecurity of Mankind from the wiles and devices of Impoſtors, keep the balance inclined, (in this and every other kind of Proof) on that ſide which he favours, and has a mind to countenance and promote. Thus it was in the Caſe of *Moſes* and *Pharaoh*'s magicians, *they* were born down by the ſuperior Powers exerted by *Moſes*. Thus *Elijah* prevailed againſt *Baal's* Prophets, by calling for fire from heaven to conſume his ſacrifice, which the idolatrous Prophets could not do. Though it may be reaſonably ſuppoſed, that the Devil, by his own natural power could have done the ſame in their favour, if God had not reſtrained him.

If this Reaſoning then be good; if we are ſatisfied, that wicked ſpirits and the power, be it what it will, are under God's reſtraint; if it be utterly unreaſonable to think, that God will ever

ever ſuffer greater inſtances of Power to be exerted in countenance of Impoſture, than in confirmation of the Truth; then are we aſſured, that the miraculous interpoſitions, in favour of the Goſpel, were not the effect of any diabolical aſſiſtance; but were Acts of Countenance given to it by God himſelf. For they are unqueſtionably ſuch, as no Prophet elſe ever had or pretended to. And we dare to put the Cauſe of Chriſtianity upon this iſſue, that if ever any Doctrine had the like countenance with it, then we will inſiſt no more upon Miracles wrought in Confirmation of it.

SERM. III.

Secondly, We may be aſſured, that the Powers exerted to Countenance the Chriſtian Cauſe were not from wicked Spirits, but from God; becauſe the Perſons, to whom thoſe Powers, and that Cauſe was committed, were not fit inſtruments to be employed in the cauſe of Impoſture. It is one of the diſtinguiſhing marks of Impoſture, that there is uſually a great deal of worldly wiſdom mixed with it. Men have ſome ſelfiſh paſſion, ſome by-ends to ſerve, which they are willing to proſecute at any rate; before they can be inclined, or ſeduced, to engage in a cauſe of ſuch a nature.

SERM. III. Such they are, that lie open and exposed to the ſnares and inſinuations of the Devil, and they are the inſtruments he uſually works withal. But it is impoſſible to fix any ſuſpicion of this kind upon Chriſt or his Apoſtles. They diſcovered themſelves in all their Conduct to be the moſt diſintereſted, humble, upright perſons living: inſtead of making any private advantages to themſelves, of that eſteem and reputation they had procured thro' the wonderful works wrought by them, they both refuſed and deſpiſed them. They forſook all the comforts and conveniencies of life, expoſed themſelves to continual hardſhips, not only of hunger and thirſt, of cold and nakedneſs, having no certain dwelling places; but to all the frowns and diſcouragements of this world; to perſecutions, and tryals, and mockings and ſcourgings; to the cruelleſt tortures, and the crueleſt deaths, that the malice of their Enemies could invent for them. On the other hand, they treated all Mankind with the utmoſt humanity and good-will; never ſeeking to revenge their wrongs, or to redreſs with violence the ills that were heaped upon them; but with meekneſs and forbearance they ſuffered the loſs of all

things,

things, and that with the utmoſt chear- SERM.
fulneſs too, that the world might ſee, III.
they had ſome ſtrong inward conſola-
tion to ſupport and ſtrengthen them, e-
ven a conſciouſneſs of their own inte-
grity, and a ſure reliance on God, as an
encourager of the Cauſe they were en-
gaged in. To ſay that ſuch Men were
knowingly engaged in, or made the in-
ſtruments of impoſture, is to ſpeak a-
gainſt reaſon, and obſervation and ex-
perience. And to ſay, that God would
ſuffer ſuch ſincere diſintereſted Men to
fall under ſuch a ſtrong and fatal delu-
ſion; ſo much honeſt and well-meant
zeal to his honour and ſervice, to be
perverted to the cauſe of error and im-
poſition; and ſuffer it to be done in
ſuch a manner, that the moſt impartial
and diſintereſted minds ſhould be moſt
effectually wrought upon by it; is a ſup-
poſition ſo harſh and unreaſonable, and
implies ſuch a groſs contradiction to
the known Attributes of God, that it
cannot need arguments to remove it,
or words to expoſe it. We may there-
fore again conclude, conſidering the
Inſtruments employed, what kind of
Perſons they were, to whom thoſe ſu-
pernatural Powers, appealed to in con-
firmation of the Goſpel, were com-
mitted;

SERM. III.

mitted; that thoſe Powers were not communicated to them by any wicked ſpirit, to ſerve the cauſe of Impoſture; and conſequently that they were given by the Spirit of God.

Laſtly, If it were poſſible, or probable, that wicked ſpirits had ſuch Powers, and were permitted to uſe them, and that ſincere diſintereſted Men were expoſed to ſuch inevitable Deluſions; yet it is incredible, that wicked ſpirits ſhould be aſſiſting to ſo good a Purpoſe, as that, which was viſibly deſigned and effectually promoted by the Goſpel. The Deſign of wicked ſpirits is (no doubt) to alienate Men, as far as they are able, from that ſupreme Spiritual Being, whom they hate and reſiſt; to ſeduce Mankind, if they are able, from chuſing him as the Object of worſhip: if this fail, to corrupt his worſhip with unacceptable ſuperſtitions and deteſtable oblations; to engage them, tho' in words they confeſs him, yet in works to deny him; not to truſt in him, or ſeek his favour; but to depend upon, and delight in, the uncertain enjoyments of this life, and to purſue them by ſuch methods, as are utterly diſpleaſing to him. And where any thing of this kind appears to be the

the intent or conſequence of a pre- SERM.
tended Revelation, no Miracles, I own, III.
how great or many ſoever, would be
ſufficient to perſuade *me*, to look upon
them as inſtances of Divine Interpo-
ſition, or to receive the Doctrine coun-
tenanced by them. But on the other
hand, when a Doctrine has no ten-
dency of this kind, but is evidently de-
ſigned to recover an idolatrous world,
from the worſhip of ſtocks and ſtones,
the faſhioning of their hands, and the
fancies of their brains, to the know-
ledge and worſhip of the one ſupreme
eternal Cauſe of all things, on whom
every thing depends; to correct their
mean unworthy apprehenſions of him,
and to poſſeſs them with thoughts and
affections towards him, ſuitable to
his excellent Majeſty; to love, honour
and fear him above all things; to imi-
tate him in his Righteouſneſs, Good-
neſs, Truth, and all his other imitable
Perfections; to worſhip him in heart
and not in tongue, as One that knows
the inmoſt thoughts of it: I ſay, when
we find a Doctrine thus calculated to
promote the honour of God, to re-
form and perfect humane Nature, and
offering more effectual motives to en-
gage and keep us in the exerciſe of ſuch
things;

SERM. III.

things; what ſhould induce us to ſuſpect, whether the external inſtances of Countenance, by ſupernatural Means, were from God or not? Is it a cauſe any way likely to be favoured by wicked ſeducing ſpirits? Could the Devil be ſuppoſed to conſult and promote the ruin of his own Kingdom? This was not only the Event, but the viſible Deſign of the Chriſtian Doctrine. The very notion we have of wicked ſpirits is, that they would deſtroy, or corrupt, as far as they are able, the Worſhip of God, and miſ-lead Mankind in their purſuit of true Happineſs. And the world had been too viſibly wrought upon to theſe purpoſes; when the Goſpel appeared to reduce Men to the Worſhip of the true God, and to the Practice of every thing that is reaſonable, juſt and good. It was an Objection therefore of much greater malice than force, to impute the Miracles wrought in Confirmation of the Goſpel to the aſſiſtance of the Devil. For the Deſign, whether God was the Author of it or not, was directly contrary to the nature of wicked ſpirits, and viſibly deſtructive of the Devil's empire over the Underſtandings of Men. It is certain therefore that it had not any countenance

countenance from wicked ſpirits, and conſequently thoſe miraculous works wrought in its favour, exceeding all human Capacity and Power, were inſtances of Divine Countenance and Encouragement given to it. SERM. III.

Thus have I endeavoured to ſhew you the Nature, Uſe and Validity of this Proof by Miracles; that it is not only a mere probable argument in favour of Chriſtianity; but a direct, reaſonable and convincing Proof of Divine Interpoſition to Countenance and Support it: Yet we find many little cavils and exceptions taken at it, and much pains uſed to perſuade us, that it cannot be depended upon. Sometimes it is ſuggeſted, that the Hiſtory, where theſe Miracles are recorded, is doubtful and to be ſuſpected: then again, ſuſpecting their Abilities to maintain this Cavil, they attack the Evidence ariſing from them. Thus, ſhuffling from one topick to another, they ſeem well ſatisfied with neither. But paſſion, prejudice, and a determined oppoſition to Chriſtianity, for no other reaſon, but becauſe 'tis one of the *domineering Religions* (as they call every thing, that is embraced by a conſiderable part of Mankind) has engaged them to diſpute

SERM. III.

pute every thing, that gives it Countenance; and this they call *freedom of thinking*: Which in ſhort, in their ſenſe of the word is, to cavil at every thing, to acquieſce in nothing; to repreſent every Religion as falſe, to ſubſtitute none as true in its room; to pull down, but not to build; and to ſeem wiſer than the reſt of Mankind, by bringing every thing into queſtion, which the wiſeſt and beſt of Men have approved, and for that reaſon endeavoured to eſtabliſh.

SERMON IV.

Proof by MIRACLES Vindicated.

JOHN XV. 24.

If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had ſin.

IT being very obvious to obſerve, that Chriſt and his Apoſtles, in juſtification of the Chriſtian Doctrine, inſiſt much upon Proof by Miracles; not only *as Works foretold to be done by the* Meſſiah, but as Works, which manifeſt a Divine Interpoſition to Countenance and Support it: I endeavoured, in my laſt Diſcourſe, to ſhew the Nature, Uſe and Validity of that kind of Proof in Confirmation of a Doctrine coming from God. In doing SERM. IV.

SERM. IV.

ing this, my principal Deſign was to prove, that the Miracles wrought in Confirmation of the Goſpel were inſtances of Divine Interpoſition; ſuppoſing that a Doctrine countenanced there would readily be acknowledged to be from God: His Countenance being the ſame as a Command obliging us to receive it.

The Argument we chiefly uſe, to prove them to be inſtances of Divine Interpoſition, is taken from the Number and Greatneſs of them, wherein they exceeded all that were ever done in Confirmation of any Doctrine whatſoever. Aſcribe them to any human power, or to any poſſible improvements thereof by natural Means, we cannot. What intermediate Agents there are between God and us, what Powers they are poſſeſſed of, we know not. Yet, allowing them to have as great as may be, conſiſtent with limitation and ſubordination to the Power of God; allowing alſo there are ſome wicked enough to do their utmoſt to deceive us; we are ſure, as ſure as we are of any of the known Attributes of God, that he will never ſuffer greater inſtances of Power to be exerted, greater marks of countenance to be given to an Impoſture,

ſture, than in confirmation of the truth. And foraſmuch as we have no other way of judging of theſe external Interpoſitions, which are of God, but by the exceeding Greatneſs of them; it would be unnatural to ſuppoſe, that God would ſuffer the advantage in this reſpect to be on the ſide of impoſture, which would be rendring his own Interpoſition of this kind vain and of no effect. SERM. IV.

It is upon this account we find our Bleſſed Lord in the *Text* condemning the *Jews* as inexcuſable: Becauſe he had *done among them the works which none other man did:* having not only diſtinguiſh'd himſelf from perſons ſuſpected of impoſture, by exceeding all the Powers pretended to be exerciſed in their favour; but having greatly exceeded likewiſe all that went before him, and were by the *Jews*, for their works ſake, received as true Prophets.

But 'tis objected, that Chriſtianity will not admit of this kind of Proof, that Miracles (be they never ſo many and great) avail nothing in juſtification of it. Becauſe *the grand fundamental Article of Chriſtianity was, that Jeſus was the* Meſſiah *of the* Jews *predicted in the* Old Teſtament; *which could not*

SERM. IV. *appear, or be proved, but from the* Old Teſtament *. *If the Proofs* therefore *for Chriſtianity from the* Old Teſtament *be not valid, if the arguments founded on thoſe books be not concluſive; and the Propheſies cited from thence be not fulfilled; then has Chriſtianity no juſt foundation.*— *Nor can Miracles avail any thing in the caſe: For Miracles can never render a foundation valid, which is in it ſelf invalid, can never make a falſe inference true, can never make a Propheſy fulfilled, which is not fulfilled; can never mark out a* Meſſiah *or Jeſus for the* Meſſiah, *if both are not markt out in the* Old Teſtament †. And again, *If Jeſus be not the Perſon propheſied of, as the* Meſſiah *in the* Old Teſtament, *his Miracles will not prove him to be ſo* ‡. How far we are able to prove from the *Old Teſtament*, that Jeſus was the *Meſſiah* propheſied of therein, will be another queſtion: from whence alſo I hope we ſhall be able to bring further Proof in confirmation of our Religion. My buſineſs at preſent is to conſider, how far this reaſoning is an objection againſt the Validity of Proof by Miracles. And I think 'tis none at all. For whatever is a valid Proof of a

* Ibid. p. 12. † Ib. p. 31, 32. ‡ Ib. p. 37.

a Divine Commiſſion, is a valid Proof of every Article taught and confirmed by vertue of that Commiſſion: But I have already proved, that Chriſt's Miracles were a valid Proof of his Divine Commiſſion; conſequently they were a valid Proof of his being the *Meſſiah*, which was an article taught and confirmed by vertue of that Commiſſion. To ſay, that *if he were not the* Meſſiah, *his Miracles will not prove him to be ſo*, is begging the queſtion; and by the ſame way of arguing, you may invalidate all kind of Proof whatſoever. SERM. IV.

But it may help us to judge a little better of the force of this Objection by trying it upon ſome other ſubject. Suppoſe a perſon arguing from the many barbarities committed by *Nero*, that he was a very cruel perſon: would it not be ridiculous to hear a Man, objecting againſt the Validity of this Proof, ſay, if he was not a cruel Man, all the barbarities committed by him will not prove that he was ſo. By the ſame way of reaſoning you may as effectually invalidate the Proof drawn from Propheſies compleated; and ſay, if Jeſus was an Impoſtor, let the Propheſies of the *Old Teſtament*, relating to a *Meſſiah*, be never ſo many, and

SERM. IV.

never ſo clearly fulfilled in him, they will not prove him to be a true Prophet; for the completion of Propheſies *can never render a foundation valid, that is in it ſelf invalid*; *can never make a falſe inference true*; nor mark out a Prophet coming from God, if he never ſent him, nor gave him commiſſion to act and teach as ſuch. Nay you may go further, and argue after the ſame manner againſt the Authority of God himſelf. For his Authority *cannot render a foundation valid, that is in it ſelf invalid*; *cannot make a falſe inference true*; nor prove a thing to be what it is not. There is no Man, I am perſuaded, but what is able to give a ready anſwer to ſuch objections, by telling the objector, that his ſuppoſition is abſurd and ought not to be granted. The ſame anſwer therefore will ſerve us in behalf of the Miracles wrought in confirmation of the Goſpel. That 'tis abſurd to ſuppoſe (for Reaſons already given) that God ſhould ſuffer ſo many, ſo great, ſuch unconteſted Miracles to be wrought, in juſtification of a Perſon taking upon himſelf a character, that did not belong to him. We do not pretend that Miracles will prove a thing to be what it

it is not; no more will Propheſies com- SERM.
pleated, nor yet the Authority of God, IV.
nor any other good Proof whatſoever. But if it be a good argument againſt the Validity of a Proof, that it will not prove contradictions; we are ready to own, that we have no valid Proof in defence of Chriſtianity, and we are glad we have not.

I beg leave to make one obſervation more, which I hope will effectually clear this Point, *viz.* That our Author's ſtate of the caſe is not ſtrictly true: For *the grand fundamental Article of Chriſtianity* is not, *that Jeſus was the* Meſſiah *predicted in the* Old Teſtament; but that Jeſus was a Prophet, or a Teacher come from God: and one argument, uſed to convince the *Jews* that he was ſo, was by ſhowing, that the characters of a *Meſſiah*, or great Prophet promiſed in the *Old Teſtament*, were fulfilled in him. His Miracles were a diſtinct kind of Proof from this, and did, antecedently to the conſideration of Propheſies compleated, prove him to be a Prophet, or Teacher come from God. Even that *perfectly concluſive Proof* (as he calls it) *drawn from an inſpired Book* muſt

SERM. IV. finally be reduced to this of Miracles, and cannot ſtand without it.

We are told, *That it is a neceſſary method for new Revelations to be built and grounded on precedent Revelations* *; that therefore *the truth of Chriſtianity depends, as it ought, on ancient Revelations contained in the* Old Teſtament †, Now ſuppoſe we had proved, that Chriſtianity is juſtly and clearly founded upon Judaiſm, and were able to juſtify all the parts of Chriſtianity from the *Old Teſtament*, ſo far, that he, who received the *Old*, would be obliged by ſtricteſt reaſon to admit the *New Teſtament* to be of God: This would not anſwer the purpoſe of a ſincere Inquirer, whether the Chriſtian Doctrine be really of Divine Inſtitution; until he is further ſatisfied, that the *Old Teſtament* was really of Divine Inſtitution. Conſequently this new queſtion would ariſe, How do we know the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament* were of God? If this alſo be founded upon a preceding Revelation, with which it ought to be compared, and by which it ought to be juſtified; we muſt then alſo continue our inquiry about the Truth and Divinity of that Revelation likewiſe; and

* Ibid. p. 20. † Ibid. p. 25.

and ſo muſt ſtill run the chain back- SERM.
ward, 'till we come to the firſt link, IV.
to a firſt Revelation, which had no pre-
ceding one, whereon it could be found-
ed: and there we ſhall be obliged to
look out for ſome other proof, than
what our Author has inſiſted on, as ne-
ceſſary in the caſe of Chriſtianity. For
that could not not be built upon a *pre-
ceding Revelation*, could not be juſtified
by arguments *drawn from an inſpired
Book*. When therefore he ſhall be
pleaſed to tell us, what Proof was requi-
ſite, what Arguments were ſufficient to
juſtify that firſt fundamental Revela-
tion; then we undertake to prove,
that the Chriſtian Revelation had that
Proof, is equally capable of being ju-
ſtified thereby, and conſequently what
he inſiſts on, as a *neceſſary method*, is
needleſs in itſelf, as 'tis tedious in the
application. I will venture therefore
from this obſervation to lay down the
following propoſition;

That the Chriſtian Doctrine had (*in-
dependent of the* Old Teſtament) as
good Proof, as any firſt fundamental
Revelation could be ſuppoſed to have;
that therefore to deny the Validity of
it, would be to overthrow the Foun-
dation of all Revealed Religion. For

SERM. IV.

all the Proof a firſt Revelation could have, beſides the *internal* excellence of the Doctrine it ſelf, muſt be from ſome *external* interpoſitions of Providence (ſuch as Miracles are) in its favour. And if ſuch miraculous interpoſitions were then a ſufficient Proof of Divine Countenance, what does hinder, but they ſhould be ſo ſtill? Had the firſt fundamental Revelation greater inſtances of this kind, than the Goſpel had? far otherwiſe. We appeal to our adverſaries in this Caſe. Let them name that preceding Revelation, which had ſuch inſtances of Power exerted in its favour, or any thing like them. If they can do this, they are excuſed by our Bleſſed Lord from believing on him. He tells Men freely, that if he *had not done the works, which none other man did*, they that disbelieve him would be without ſin. But if the Proof he gave of this kind exceeded, what any firſt fundamental Revelation could be ſuppoſed to have; if it could have no other Proof but this; what will be the conſequence of denying the Validity of it? It muſt in ſhort be this, That the foundation, upon which the firſt was built, was invalid. And if that fails for want of ſufficient Proof, then all the

the ſucceeding ones, built upon *it* and upon one another, muſt fail with it; and conſequently our Author's *neceſſary method, of building every new Revelation upon a preceding one*, is by himſelf invalidated, by endeavouring to invalidate the Proof by Miracles, which is in reality the fundamental ſupport of it. SERM. IV.

But if a firſt Revelation could be eſtabliſhed, and ſufficiently confirmed without an Appeal to a preceding Revelation; if Miracles were available in juſtification of it, and ought to have been admitted as valid Proofs; then will they be as valid Proofs in juſtification of a *new ſucceeding Revelation*. And if the *New one* has the ſame Proof and better of the kind, than the *Old one*; there can be *no neceſſity* (at leaſt) that the *New* ſhould depend upon the *Old*; becauſe he who admits the foundation, upon which the *Old* is built, cannot without manifeſt inconſiſtency reject the *New*, which has, *independent of the Old*, a better foundation of the ſame kind than it.

Suppoſe one were arguing with a *Heathen*, as wiſe as our Author, about the Truth of Chriſtianity: who upon his ſcheme ſhould inſiſt that Chriſtianity

SERM. IV.

anity ought to be founded upon *Judaiſm.* If he ſhould be convinced of this, would he reſt here, or would he not go on to queſtion us about the Authority of the *Old Teſtament?* It is natural to think he would. And then we muſt either find out ſome *preceding Revelation*, by which it may be juſtified, or elſe have recourſe to the Proof before mentioned. If we could juſtify it by reference to ſome *preceding Revelation*; he would queſtion us about the Authority of *that* likewiſe; and ſo on, 'till we came to a firſt: and then he muſt either ſubmit to the Proof before mentioned, or elſe unreaſonably inſiſt on ſuch ſort of Proof, as the ſubject is not capable of. But if at laſt he allows the Validity of it, then the only ſolid Foundation, that, on which we muſt ultimately depend, is the ſame which Chriſtianity has, *independent of all precedent Revelations, viz.* That the Doctrine is not repugnant to Reaſon, and that it had the external Proof by Miracles to confirm its Divine Authority.

It ſeems to me therefore a very ſtrange Paradox to aſſert, That *Gentiles, before they could become Chriſtians, ought to believe Judaiſm to come from*

from God *. I am ſatisfied the contrary was true in fact; that inſtead of receiving the *New* upon the Authority of the *Old*, they received the *Old* upon the Authority of the *New Teſtament*. And it was the eaſier and more rational way, to convince them firſt of the Truth of Chriſtianity; becauſe the Proofs thereof were greater in themſelves, nearer at hand, and better to be perceived by *Gentiles*, than the Proofs whereon *Judaiſm* was firſt founded. And to me it is one of the moſt *unſcholaſtick* ridiculous Rules of Reaſoning in the world, to prove a propoſition by a medium, leſs clear and certain, than the propoſition propoſed to be proved by it. SERM. IV.

But 'tis ſaid, *If we conſider the Nature of things, we ſhall find, that it muſt be difficult, if not impoſſible, to introduce among men (who in all civilized countries are bred up in the belief of ſome Revealed Religion) a Revealed Religion wholly new, or ſuch as has no reference to a preceding one* †. The difficulty of it we allow; the impoſſibility of it is ſufficiently diſproved in the caſe of Chriſtianity. Therefore to the credit and confirmation of Chriſtianity

* Ibid. p. 95. † Ibid. p. 23.

SERM. IV.

ſtianity let it be acknowledged, thro' what great, and (humanly ſpeaking) inſuperable Difficulties, it prevailed over the moſt civilized Parts of the moſt civilized States, *Greece* and *Rome*; to whom it was a Religion wholly new; a Religion that had no reference to any preceding one received by them; but directly contrary to theirs in all reſpects; which declared theirs to be not only corrupt, but falſe from its original, never to have proceeded from God, but from the Devil. Yet this Religion, ſo wholly new to them; ſo clean contrary to theirs, did ſpread it ſelf among them in a moſt aſtoniſhing manner, not only without, but againſt human Means vigorouſly employed to ſuppreſs it. And tho' it combated the paſſions, the prejudices, the intereſts, the luſts of Men, and every thing that could poſſibly prepoſſeſs them againſt it, yet it gained ground more than any ever did, that had all theſe to favour it. As *great an Exception*, as *perfect Novelty* may ſeem to be *to a Religious Inſtitution*, Chriſtianity was ſuch, and as ſuch was it repreſented to the *Heathen*. St. *Paul*, both at *Lyſtra* and at *Athens*, preaching it to people wholly idolatrous, never mentioned the *Old Teſtament* to them,

Acts xiv, and xvii.

them, nor the reference of Chriſtianity thereto. He argued with them upon the Principles of Reaſon (for rational they were, and this was all the diſpoſition they had for Converſion) againſt the Religon they embraced: and to eſtabliſh the Doctrine he taught, he wrought a Miracle himſelf, and appealed to that great Miracle of Chriſt's Reſurrection, in Confirmation of it. And inſtead of haranguing them about preceding Revelations of the Divine Will, he tells the *Athenians*, that 'till then *the times of* heathen *ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent; Becauſe he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.* So far from attempting to convert them firſt to *Judaiſm* that he never mentions that Religion to them; but endeavours at once to eſtabliſh Chriſtianity upon the Principles of Reaſon, and by the Miracles wrought in Confirmation of it. And this method, obſerved by the Apoſtle in making *Gentile* Converts, I have proved to be valid, and that it cannot be overthrown,

Acts xvii. 30, 31.

SERM. IV.

thrown, without overthrowing the foundation of all Revealed Religon. I ſhall proceed to prove,

That it was valid with reſpect to the *Jews* likewiſe? becauſe the Chriſtian Revelation has thereby the ſame Proof, and greater in its kind, of Divine Authority, than the *Jewiſh* Religion, and conſequently that every ſincere conſiſtent *Jew* is obliged to receive it. For Miracles are by the *Old Teſtament* allowed and appealed to, as Proofs of a Divine Commiſſion. Theſe were the Credentials of all their Prophets. By Virtue of them they claimed the belief of the people, and for their Works ſake, their Doctrine was received as true, and acknowledged to be from God. I need not detain you with inſtances of the later *Jewiſh* Prophets: that one of *Moſes* will ſuffice for all; becauſe he was the Founder of their Religion. For no conſiſtent *Jew* would deny the Validity of that Proof, upon which he perceives his own Religion to be founded.

When God firſt called *Moſes* to ſend him to the Children of *Iſrael* with his Authority and Commiſſion; *Moſes* objected, *Behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken to my voice; for they*

they will ſay, the Lord hath not appeared unto thee, (Exod. iv. 1.) Let us ſee then what Method God took to remove this objection, and to convince thoſe to whom he was ſending *Moſes*, that he had appeared unto him. He bid *Moſes* caſt his rod upon the ground; he caſt it on the ground, and it became a ſerpent. He bid him take it again, he did, and it became a rod in his hand. This Miracle was to be a proof of his Miſſion, (*v.* 5.) *That they may believe that the Lord God of their Fathers hath appeared unto thee.* To this were added two more, that if the firſt failed, theſe might give them full conviction (*v.* 8, 9.) *Moſes* went accordingly, and took *Aaron* with him. And when the Meſſage was delivered, and the Signs wrought, it is ſaid *the people believed*, (*v.* 31.)

Here then is a plain and undeniable Proof from the *Old Teſtament*, that Miracles were deſigned by God, as *abſolute, valid Proofs* of a Divine Commiſſion. They were the Foundation upon which the *Jewiſh* Religion was firſt built. And their great Prophet, by whom it was revealed, was to depend upon this ſort of Proof in confirmation

SERM. IV.

firmation of his Miſſion. Upon this ſingle conſideration therefore I would ask, How could a *Jew*, conſiſtently with his own Religion, which was founded on this Proof, or with himſelf (if he received it, as it was at firſt recommended by God) reject our Bleſſed Lord, bringing with him the ſame Proof, but far exceeding that, which *Moſes* brought, both in the number and greatneſs of the Miracles done by him? The Miracles wrought by *Moſes* were not *propheſied of in any ancient Book*, they could not be conſidered by them, as *fulfilling the Sayings* of ſome preceding Prophet: In ſhort, natural Reaſon, not any peculiar motive or circumſtance attending them, engaged the *Iſraelites* to regard them, as inſtances of Divine countenance, given to the perſon, by whom they were wrought. And if they were admitted, as ſuch, in confirmation of the *Jewiſh* Religion; I believe it will be hard to give a Reaſon, why they ſhould not be allowed the ſame weight in juſtification of Chriſtianity. Therefore I think it abſurd to make the *Old Teſtament* the ſole foundation of the *New*, when we have (excluſive of the Proofs drawn from thence, greater and ſurer evidence

evidence of the Truth and Divinity of the Chriſtian Revelation, than we have of the Jewiſh Revelation, both from the Nature of the Revelation it ſelf, and from the external Proofs brought to confirm it. But to proceed a little further. SERM. IV.

The *Jews* could not without inconſiſtency deny the Validity of this Proof by Miracles in juſtification of Chriſtianity; becauſe it was the Proof fixed upon in their Law to try a Prophet by, who ſhould *come unto them in the name of the Lord.* Their Lawgiver *Moſes*, far from ſuggeſting, that the Diſpenſation granted by him was *to laſt for ever*, that it admitted of *no change, ingraftment, or new Diſpenſation* to ſucceed it, had told them, that God would *raiſe them up a Prophet, like unto him, put Words into his Mouth*, who ſhould make a diſcovery of his Will to them. But that this Promiſe, and the Expectation raiſed in them thereby, might not expoſe them to the falſe Pretences of Impoſtors, he went on to tell them how they ſhould diſtinguiſh the true from the falſe Prophet. They were to expect a ſign from him; he was either to undertake ſome extraordinary thing

SERM. IV. himſelf, or to foretell ſome extraordinary Event, which ſhould happen in his favour, as an inſtance of Divine countenance given to him: and according as the Prophet failed, or ſucceeded in this, they were to receive or reject him. Put what conſtruction you will upon this direction given by *Moſes* for the tryal of that Prophet, who ſhould *come unto them in the name of the Lord*, Chriſt could not be deficient upon tryal, having given in both kinds the moſt and greateſt ſigns of Divine Countenance, that any Prophet ever gave, or pretended to give in confirmation of his Miſſion. To ſay therefore, that his Miracles avail nothing in his juſtification, is to ſay, that *Moſes* ſtarted a difficulty which he could not ſolve; that he gave his followers ſuch Directions, as would, if followed, inevitably deceive them: that he put a caſe of greateſt importance upon the moſt precarious Proof; and by his very caution took the moſt effectual way to betray them into that conſequence, which he cautioned them againſt. For it ought to be obſerved, that this is the only Rule given them for the tryal of a Prophet, who ſhould *come unto them in the name of the Lord*; though he

he had taken upon him to treat expreſs- SERM.
ly on that ſubject, had ſtarted the diffi- IV.
culty himſelf, and put the caſe by way
of caution to prevent their being de-
ceived: plainly ſuggeſting, that this
was the beſt and ſafeſt experiment they
could make, that it might of it ſelf be
depended upon, and ought to be ad-
mitted by them as a ſufficient juſtifica-
tion of a Prophet, ſpeaking to them
in the name of the Lord.

The *Old Teſtament*, therefore, it is plain, inſtead of invalidating this Proof by Miracles, does in the moſt effectual manner eſtabliſh it; not only by preſcribing it, as a juſt and valid Proof of a Divine Commiſſion; but alſo by reſting its own Authority thereupon. So that a conſiſtent *Jew* is obliged to admit this Proof, as a valid one, or elſe to give up his own Religion too, as wanting a juſt foundation.

But to ſcreen the *Jews* a little from this charge of inconſiſtency, and to furniſh them with ſomething like a plea for rejecting our Bleſſed Lord, notwithſtanding his Miracles, we are told, that, *If at any time God does permit Miracles to be done for the Confirmation of a falſe pretended Miſſion, we have directions from the* Old

SERM. IV. Teſtament *not to regard ſuch Miracles* *. This is a wonderful wiſe obſervation! very inſtructive! and of great uſe to diſtinguiſh true from falſe Prophets! As much as to ſay, do not believe a falſe pretended Miſſion to be a true and real one upon any Pretence whatſoever. But what need had our Author to cite the *Old Teſtament* in juſtification of this *uſeful* caution? There is ſo much glaring Truth in it, that (I dare ſay) no body would have diſputed it with him, if he had brought neither Argument nor Authority to ſupport it. Authority it has none, but his own: therefore let him take the credit of it to himſelf, and not throw it away upon *Moſes*, who has no manner of title to it.

The words of *Moſes* referred to, as containing this *excellent* Advice, are *Deut.* xiii. 1, *&c. If there ariſe among you a Prophet — and giveth thee a ſign or a wonder, and the ſign or the wonder come to paſs, whereof he ſpake unto thee, ſaying, Let us go after other Gods. - Thou ſhalt not hearken to the words of that Prophet.* Now take this direction of *Moſes* according to the natural conſtruction of the words, and it appears to be a very uſeful,

* Ibid. p. 32.

uſeful, as well as a very intelligible exception to a general rule. He does not ſuppoſe, that God would ſuffer more or greater Miracles to be done by a Prophet, attempting to ſeduce them from the worſhip of the only true God; but admitting, that ſuch an one ſhould be permitted to give a ſign or a wonder, leſt unwary minds ſhould be ſurprized by them, he gave them this ſtanding caution, never to regard that Sign, nor the Prophet giving it, when his Doctrine tended to Idolatry. The exception we readily admit of. The Chriſtian Doctrine is entirely free from it; and conſequently the Miracles wrought in its favour are ſtill, according to the *Old Teſtament*, unexceptionable Proofs in Confirmation of it. But the natural conſtruction was not to our Author's purpoſe; he was therefore tempted to put a new gloſs upon it; by which he has given it ſuch an unlucky turn as makes it neither rule nor exception. SERM. IV.

But 'tis added *, That *the* Jews *might, till they were ſet right in their interpretations of the* Old Teſtament, *— as juſtly reject Jeſus, aſſerting his Miſſion and Doctrine with Miracles, as any other perſon, who in vertue of Miracles;*

* Ibid. p. 36.

SERM. IV. *racles, would lead them into Idolatry.* Now I think he might, with more honeſty, more concluſiveneſs, more conſiſtency with himſelf, have ſaid, That Jeſus had, in vertue of his Miracles, legal Authority to ſet the *Jews* right in their interpretations of the *Old Teſtament*; than he could ſay, That *till they were ſet right, they might juſtly reject him*, notwithſtanding his Miracles. *Moſes* forbid them to regard the Miracles of one that attempted to lead them into Idolatry; he never forbid them regard *his* Miracles, who ſhould attempt to ſet them right in their interpretations of the *Old Teſtament*. It is agreed on all hands, that the *Jews* might have erred in their interpretations, even of *their OWN books*; they themſelves allowed it, and expected that the *Meſſiah* ſhould ſet them right; and beyond all this, the objector himſelf has made it a part of a Prophet's character, *to retrieve from corrupt gloſſes, innovations and traditions* a former Revelation *. What better Proof then could Jeſus give the *Jews*, that he was a Prophet, and conſequently had Authority to execute this part of a Prophet's character, than that which was fixed

* Ibid. p. 21.

fixed upon by their own Lawgiver *Moſes*, as a teſt of a true Prophet? SERM. IV.

This Obſervation will furniſh us with one good reaſon, why an honeſt *Gentile* could not *allow the* Jews *to underſtand their OWN books better than the Apoſtles:* becauſe it would be an inſtance of too groſs partiality to prefer the interpretations of intereſted, prejudiced, factious Men, who had no one pretence to inſpiration, to the ſenſe of the Apoſtles, who had forſaken every worldly intereſt, all the advantages of life, were ſincere, upright, patient even unto death; and had withal the greateſt Marks and Proofs of a Divine Commiſſion, greater than thoſe very Prophets, by whom the Scriptures *to be interpreted* were at firſt delivered.

We may alſo obſerve, how proper it was that the *Meſſiah* ſhould bring ſome other Proof, beſide that of Propheſies compleated, in Confirmation of his Miſſion. For as long as Men are ſubject to paſſion and prejudice, governed by their intereſts and inclinations, there will be diſputes about Scripture and the interpretation of it; their worldly affections will mix themſelves with, and influence their religious in-

SERM. IV.

quiries. God therefore foreſeeing (as indeed human foreſight might) that cavils and diſputes would ariſe about Propheſies and their interpretation, thro' ignorance, or prejudice, or both, thought not fit to reſt the Authority of his Son upon the bare completion of Propheſies in him; but gave him other extraordinary Proofs of his Commiſſion, to bear him out againſt ſuch cavils and exceptions.

It will be asked, perhaps, Did not Chriſt pretend to be the *Meſſiah* ſpoken of in the *Old Teſtament?* Did not this oblige the *Jews*, who believed the *Old Teſtament*, to ſearch it, and ſee what Propheſies there were to that purpoſe, and whether they were fulfilled in Chriſt? This we allow, and this we inſiſt upon, as another Argument diſtinct from that of Miracles, in juſtification of the Chriſtian Doctrine. But 'tis abſurd to infer from hence, that this was the only Proof inſiſted on, or that Proof by Miracles ought therefore to be excluded. For that Miracles were inſiſted on, as a valid Proof likewiſe, is evident from the *Text*, and from many other paſſages of Scripture. And it will appear, that even before the moſt material Propheſies were fulfilled,

filled, the *Jews* were obliged to acknowledge Jeſus to be the *Meſſiah*, through whom they were *afterwards to be fulfilled*, by Vertue of his Miracles. SERM. IV.

To make this Matter clear, let us ſuppoſe the Character, Chriſt took upon him, to be founded upon ſuch predictions as theſe. That there ſhould One ariſe of the ſeed of *Abraham, in whom all the Nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed*; who ſhould be of the Tribe of *Judah* likewiſe, *to whom the gathering of the People ſhould be; a Stem of the Root of* Jeſſe, *to whom the* Gentiles *ſhould ſeek*, that by him *a New Covenant* ſhould be eſtabliſhed; that to this *Covenant or Law, which ſhould go forth out of* Zion, *all nations ſhould flow* or be converted; that the Mediator of this Covenant ſhould be ill received, *wounded for our tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our iniquities, pour out his Soul unto death, make it an offering for ſin, and be numbered with tranſgreſſors*; that afterwards *he ſhould ſee of the travail of his Soul and be ſatisfied, prolong his days, and the pleaſure of the Lord ſhould proſper in his hands; that he ſhould have the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the utmoſt parts of the earth*

SERM. IV. *earth for his poſſeſſion*; that thro' him *idolatry ſhould ceaſe, the name of God become great among the* Gentiles, *to whom he ſhould be for a Light and for Salvation.* We need not at preſent enquire, whether theſe Propheſies related to the *Meſſiah*, or not. I would only ask, upon ſuppoſition that a Prophet ſhould come, pretending to be the Perſon deſigned to fulfill the Purpoſes mentioned in theſe, or the like Propheſies; when, and upon what motives he ought to be received? Ought he not to be received, till all theſe Propheſies are fulfilled? If ſo, then it would be impoſſible, though he were a true Prophet, that he ſhould ever be received, or that the Propheſies ſhould ever be fulfilled. For you may obſerve, that the moſt material characters ſuppoſe the Converſion of many; ſo that the completion thereof muſt *follow*, and could not *precede* their Converſion.

It was therefore plainly neceſſary in ſuch a caſe, that a Prophet, really deſigned for the completion of ſuch Propheſies, ſhould have ſome other Proof, antecedent to their completion, to juſtify his Miſſion: and it was alſo neceſſary, that Men ſhould be convinced by

by that antecedent Proof, that he was the Perſon, in whom they were *afterwards to be fulfilled.* And what more proper Proof could ſuch a Prophet give to convince Men, eſpecially the *Jews*, that he was the Perſon, through whom thoſe Propheſies were to be fulfilled, than Miracles? which had been the uſual Credentials of all their preceding Prophets, which had been preſcribed by *Moſes* for that purpoſe, and were indeed the Proofs, upon which their own Religion was founded. SERM. IV.

There is a caſe exactly parallel to this in the *Old Teſtament* which will help to illuſtrate and confirm this Obſervation. It is the caſe of *Moſes*, when God ſent him to bring the Children of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*. They had a Prophecy relating to this Event; for God had told *Abraham* many Years before, *Thy ſeed ſhall be a ſtranger in a land, that is not theirs, and ſhall ſerve them— and that nation, whom they ſhall ſerve, will I judge, and afterwards they ſhall come out with great ſubſtance*, (Gen. xv. 13, 14.) *Moſes* was the Perſon choſen to be employed in this affair. But the nature of the Prophecy is ſuch, that it was neceſſary he ſhould

SERM. IV. should be received by the *Iſraelites*, as appointed by God for that purpoſe, before the Prophecy could be fulfilled. They were not to wait the completion of the Prophecy, before they believed him; but were firſt obliged to believe him, in order to the completion of the Prophecy. What method then did God chooſe to convince them, that *Moſes* was the Perſon deſigned by him for that work? He gave him the Power of working Miracles; for this reaſon, as it is ſaid, *That they may believe that the Lord God of their Fathers hath appeared unto thee.* They did accordingly admit of this Proof, and were convinced thereby, before the Prophecy was fulfilled.

From hence therefore it is manifeſt, upon the *Jewiſh* Scheme, that Miracles are a ſufficient Proof to confirm the Miſſion of a Prophet, *antecedently to the completion of thoſe Propheſies*, which he comes to fulfill; and that by vertue of Miracles only, the *Jews* might, juſtly and conſiſtently with the *Old Teſtament*, have received Chriſt as the *Meſſiah* foretold therein, even whilſt the Propheſies relating to him were unfulfilled. And it is plain they had done no more, than what their fore-

forefathers did, and were required to do in the caſe of *Moſes*. *Moſes* told them he was ſent by God to fulfill the Purpoſes of the Propheſy delivered to *Abraham*, he ſhewed them the ſigns, which God had given him to confirm his Miſſion; when they ſaw them they believed, long before the completion of the Prophecy. SERM. IV.

Let us ſuppoſe, in the Caſe laſt mentioned, that the *Iſraelites* had caviled with *Moſes*, as our Author does in the Caſe of Chriſtianity, and had ſaid to him, *If the Proof* from the Promiſe made to *Abraham be not valid*; *if that Prophecy be not fulfilled*; then has your pretended Miſſion no juſt foundation. *Nor can your Miracles avail any thing in the caſe: for Miracles can never render a foundation valid, that is in it ſelf invalid; can never make a falſe inference true; can never make a Prophecy fulfilled, which is not fulfilled*, &c. I ſay, if the *Iſraelites* had argued thus with *Moſes*, and perſiſted in it, what would have been the event? The queſtion anſwers it ſelf, they would not have hearkened to him, and conſequently the Prophecy could not have been fulfilled. But it happened that the *Iſraelites* were not acquaint-

ed

SERM. IV.

ed with this ſubtle fetch; and therefore they acknowledged the Miſſion of *Moſes*, upon the Evidence of his Miracles only: not doubting, but that he, who had ſuch Powers committed to him, would in the Event fulfill all Propheſies, which related to the Character he took upon him.

If a Man has a mind to invalidate the force of this Proof by Miracles, I think the *Old Teſtament* the worſt Book he can ſearch for Arguments to his purpoſe. And for a *Jew* to argue againſt the Validity of that Proof, is to be inconſiſtent, both with himſelf and his Religion. Therefore our Bleſſed Lord had juſt reaſon to condemn the *Jews*, as inexcuſable in rejecting him; becauſe *he had done among them the Works, which none other man ever did.*

Having conſidered the Objections raiſed againſt the Validity of this Proof by Miracles in Confirmation of the Chriſtian Doctrine: it will be proper likewiſe to conſider, what has been ſaid againſt the *reality* of thoſe Miracles: becauſe our adverſaries, doubting of their Ability to *invalidate* this Evidence, have endeavoured to *rob* us of it; and would inſinuate, that we have no

no good grounds to believe, that thoſe Miracles were ever wrought. In one place we are told, that † *Miracles ſaid to be wrought, may be often juſtly deemed falſe reports, when attributed to Perſons, who claim an Authority from the* Old Teſtament, *which they impertinently alledge to ſupport their Pretences.* How far Chriſt and his Apoſtles may be charged with impertinence in the Appeals they made to the *Old Teſtament*, in juſtification of themſelves and their Doctrine, is a ſubject, that does not come under our preſent Conſideration. Our Buſineſs now is to conſider the Inference that is drawn from this falſe ſurmiſe: that therefore the *Miracles ſaid to be done by them may be deemed falſe reports.* Suppoſe then, upon examination of the paſſages of the *Old Teſtament* cited and applied in the *New*, I ſhould meet with ſome, that I could not eaſily account for; but ſeemed rather to be impertinently applied; would this juſtify me in rejecting the beſt atteſted Hiſtory in the world, of facts reported to be done in a learned, inquiſitive, active Age; not in private, nor in ſome obſcure corner of the world, but in publick, and amongſt the moſt civilized

SERM. IV.

† Ibid. p. 32.

SERM. IV. civilzed people and nations? What neceſſary connexion is there between *ſeeming* impertinence and *certain* unfaithfulneſs? why muſt a *Suſpicion* of the one make a Man depend upon the *Reality* of the other? This is certainly a new way of diſcrediting facts, and if it were allowed of, I believe all antiquity muſt fall before it. But let me ask again, Would not a Man of any candour and modeſty, in ſuch a caſe as this, be more inclined to ſuſpect his own judgment in thoſe things, which ſeem to him impertinent; than, out of mere compliment to his own judgment, condemn the beſt atteſted facts in the world of forgery and impoſture? For on the one hand, how very poſſible is it, that there might be ſome circumſtances known very well at that time, which would ſufficiently juſtify thoſe ſeemingly impertinent applications which we at this time may be utterly ignorant of? on the other hand, how very improbable is it, that the publick Actions of half a Century in the moſt polite and knowing Age, ſhould be handed down to us undiſproved, and yet the whole relation be nothing but fable? When both theſe caſes are well conſidered, I believe an impartial mind will be much more diſpoſed

poſed to admit the former, than the latter of theſe ſuppoſitions; and conſequently will allow, that the credit of the Miracles ought rather to remove the ſuſpicion of impertinence, than the ſuſpicion of impertinence deſtroy the credit of Miracles ſo well atteſted. SERM. IV.

It is objected again, That Miracles, however convincing they may be to thoſe that ſee them wrought, yet are not proper for the conviction of after-ages. But that *Propheſies fulfilled ſeem the moſt proper of all arguments to evince the truth of a Revelation deſigned to be univerſal: becauſe a Man who has the* Old Teſtament *in his hand, which contains Propheſies, and the* New, *which contains their completions, may have a compleat demonſtration of the truth of Chriſtianity. Whereas Arguments of another Nature* (meaning Miracles) *ſuch as relate to the Authority and genuineſs of Books, the perſons and characters of Authors and Witneſſes, require more application and underſtanding, than falls to the ſhare of the bulk of mankind* *. As to what is ſaid of Propheſies fulfilled, and the evidence ariſing from thence, we have no reaſon to conteſt it, but are pleaſed to find it allowed of as a juſt and valid

* Ibid. p. 29.

SERM. IV. Proof. But then we inſiſt further, that the Proof by Miracles is equally concluſive, and as proper for the conviction of after-ages. For the difference, which the objection makes between the one ſort of Proof and the other is only imaginary; the ſame application and underſtanding is neceſſary in both caſes. If the Authority and Genuineſs of Books and Authors muſt be enquired into, to know whether the Miracles recorded in the *New Teſtament* are true; the ſame muſt alſo be done, and that with the ſame exactneſs, to know whether the Propheſies of the *Old Teſtament* were fulfilled in the *New*. For before you can tell whether they were ſo fulfilled, as we read they were, you muſt be ſatisfied, that the hiſtory which records their completions is a true one. If you are aſſured, or have no reaſon to doubt of the truth of the hiſtory; then you have the ſame aſſurance, that the Miracles therein recorded are true likewiſe. So that you come as eaſily at leaſt, to the knowledge of Miracles wrought as of Propheſies compleated; and the very ſame ſteps, which lead you to any certainty about the one, will lead you to equal certainty about the other. The aſſurance we have, that the Miracles recorded

corded in the Goſpel were ſo wrought as they are recorded, depends upon hiſtory; the truth of that hiſtory depends upon the credit of Authors: So likewiſe, when the Goſpel takes notice of an Event, whereby ſome Prophecy of the *Old Teſtament* was fulfilled, I muſt depend as much upon hiſtory and the credit of the Authors for the truth and reality of that Event, whereby the Prophecy was compleated. Suppoſe, for inſtance, I were to enquire whether the Prophecy of *Iſaiah* was fulfilled by Chriſt. *The eyes of the blind ſhall be opened, the ears of the deaf ſhall be unſtopped, the lame ſhall leap as a hart*, and *the tongue of the dumb ſhall ſing*. If I can be aſſured that this Prophecy was fulfill'd; then by the ſame ſtep am I aſſured that theſe Miracles were wrought. And if I can be aſſured of theſe, I can as eaſily, and by the ſame methods be ſatisfied of the truth of any other facts or Miracles there recorded. Beſides, the objector ſays, that not only theſe, but Chriſt's *Miracles* in general *were propheſied of in the* Old Teſtament *, conſequently it is neceſſary to know that all his Miracles were performed, before you can be aſſured that all the Prophe-

SERM. IV.

* Ibid. p. 37.

SERM. IV.

ſies relating to him were fulfilled. The objection therefore, if it be of any force, is equally good againſt the one ſort of Proof, as againſt the other.

But that it is not good againſt either, will appear by conſidering the abſurdities, that follow from it. To eſtabliſh and confirm a Divine Revelation, it is neceſſary that there ſhould be ſome extraordinary interpoſitions of Providence to give it countenance. The queſtion therefore will be, Whether theſe extraordinary methods, once taken and publickly executed in one Age and Nation, and a credible well-atteſted hiſtory thereof, ſhall be deemed ſufficient for the ſatisfaction of diſtant Ages and Nations; or whether it be neceſſary, for the eſtabliſhment and ſupport of a Revelation deſign'd to be univerſal, that the ſame or like meaſures ſhould be repeated in every Age and Nation to the end of the world. If this latter be inſiſted on, then in order to ſupport the Chriſtian Revelation, and to fulfill the Propheſies of the *Old Teſtament*, in a manner not liable to this exception, Chriſt muſt have appeared on earth and dwelt amongſt us, and died, and roſe again, and aſcended up to Heaven, and returned hither, and repeated

repeated the ſame Actions over and over continually; than which nothing more ridiculous could be imagined, nothing more unreaſonable could be expected. If this method therefore ought to be rejected; then it follows, that the other (for there is no medium) is the only proper and reaſonable method, and will therefore be deemed ſufficient by all reaſonable Men: That a Revelation, once confirmed by ſome remarkable interpoſitions of Providence, ſhould afterwards be received and acknowledged upon the Authority of a credible well-atteſted Hiſtory. SERM. IV.

That the Goſpel Hiſtory is ſuch (if any ſuch there be) cannot well be doubted. If we conſider, that it is not ſo much as pretended, that it ſtole into the world in a dark unactive Age; or that the writers of it had any countenance from the Powers of this world to give them credit. The facts related by them were chiefly of a publick nature, ſaid to be done in places of greateſt concourſe, where the people always reſorted: ſo that in their writings they appeal to their adverſaries, and challenge them to diſprove any part of their relation. Beſides, from the very firſt ſpreading of it, it made a

SERM. IV.

great noiſe in the world, and met with very violent oppoſition. All the ways, that Malice could invent, or Power execute, were uſed to diſcountenance and ſuppreſs it. Yet the teſtimony of the Apoſtles prevailed; nor could any one fact atteſted by them be diſproved. We have accounts ſtill remaining in *Pagan* and *Jewiſh* writers, where their Power of working Miracles is freely allowed and acknowledged. So that their teſtimony is not invalidated, but rather confirmed by the confeſſion of Adverſaries. Conſider again, the writers of it are not charged with any worldly or baſe deſign, that could tempt them to turn Impoſtors. No diſhoneſty in their converſation, no avarice or ambition, no private luſt or paſſion appeared to ſway them. The teſtimony they gave was at their peril; they perſiſted in at all hazards; forfeited every thing, that was near and dear to them in this world, in defence of it, endured all manner of reproaches and perſecutions, and racks and tortures for the ſake of it, and at laſt ſeal'd it with their blood. In ſhort, there is no circumſtance wanting, that helps to confirm the truth of an ancient hiſtory, which this has not; but many extraordinary

traordinary and remarkable Circumſtances there are concurring to give it credit, which no other hiſtory can boaſt of. SERM. IV.

The Truth of the Goſpel Hiſtory therefore, till ſome better objections than theſe are brought againſt it, will by every reaſonable Man be admitted; and conſequently the Reality of the Miracles, there recorded, remain undiſputed. And I do not doubt, but the Validity of the Proof ariſing from them will ſufficiently manifeſt it ſelf, notwithſtanding all the little cavils and exceptions raiſed againſt it; and that we ſhall have reaſon to be ſatisfied with our Saviour's Argument, That *the works which the Father had given him to finiſh, the ſame works, which he did, bore witneſs of him, that the Father had ſent him.*

SERMON V.

CHRISTIANITY justified by the *Old Teſtament.*

HEB. VIII. 7, 8, 9.

For if that firſt Covenant had been faultleſs, then ſhould no place have been ſought for the ſecond. For finding fault with them, he ſaith, Behold, the days come (ſaith the Lord) when I will make a new Covenant with the houſe of Iſrael *and with the houſe of* Judah: *Not according to the Covenant that I made with their Fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of* Ægypt.

SERM. V.

I HAVE hitherto conſidered the Chriſtian Revelation: as independent of any other preceding Revelation: As an inſtitution intirely agreeable to Reaſon, and worthy of God for its Author; not in any wiſe contrived to

to ſerve the private ends, or ſiniſter purpoſes of worldly deſigning Men; but wiſely calculated to reform and perfect human nature: not depending upon human means, nor upon the countenance of the powers of this world to make its way into it; but upon many extraordinary and miraculous inſtances of countenance, which muſt without all queſtion have been given to it by God himſelf. SERM. V.

And in theſe reſpects, I obſerved, it had as good Proof of its Divine Authority, as any firſt fundamental Revelation could be ſuppoſed to have; and conſequently could not be overthrown, without overthrowing the foundation of all Revealed Religion. That it had likewiſe the ſame Proof, but much greater in its kind, of Divine Authority, than the *Jewiſh* Religion had; conſequently that every ſincere conſiſtent *Jew* was oblig'd to receive it. And further, That the firſt Publiſhers of it had all the Proofs of Divine Authority, that were required by the *Old Teſtament* from any future Prophet; conſequently that the *Jews* were obliged by their own Scriptures to acknowledge Chriſt and his Apoſtles as true Prophets.

However,

SERM. V. However, as Chriſtianity does bear ſome relation to Judaiſm; as the *Old Teſtament* is acknowledged, by the Authors of the *New*, to be of God; we are ready to enter upon a further juſtification of our Religion, and undertake to ſhew, that 'tis not only conſiſtent with that preceding Revelation, but alſo juſtified by it.

But 'tis a Queſtion thrown in our way, and ought therefore to be conſidered, what relation Chriſtianity does bear to Judaiſm? Ought *all the parts of Chriſtianity* (every Article and Doctrine of it) *to be proved from the* Old Teſtament *, *as having its divine authority from thence* †? Is *the* Old Teſtament *the ſole true canon of Scripture* ‡? *Is Chriſtianity wholly revealed therein* ‖? Is it only *the ſecret ſpiritual meaning of thoſe Scriptures* ⁎? Does *it teach none other things than thoſe which* Moſes *and the Prophets did ſay* ⸸. *Is it not properly a new law, but Judaiſm explained, and ſet in a due light* ‡? Or (in other Words) *myſtical Judaiſm* *? This is the repreſentation that is made of it, than which nothing more remote from truth could be imagined. For the difference

* Ibid. p. 4. † p. 91. ‡ p. 13. ‖ p. 91. ⁎ p. 80. ⸸ Ibid. p. 16. * p. 15. † 92.

ference between the two Inſtitutions is very great and palpable. The Diſpenſation granted to the *Jews* was partial, calculated for, and ſuited to, the temper, diſpoſition and circumſtances of that ſingle People. The Goſpel Diſpenſation is general, directed to all Mankind, and makes no difference between *Jew* and *Gentile*. The *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation was imperfect, indulged them in many things, not otherwiſe allowable, but for the hardneſs of their hearts; on the other hand, it required many things, not needful in themſelves, not acceptable to God, which were intended only as Props to ſecure them from ſinking into Idolatry. It conſiſted, as St. *Paul* obſerves, *in meats and drinks, and divers waſhings, and carnal ordinances impoſed on them till the time of reformation.* And *was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions*, to keep up ſome ſenſe of Religion in them, till the more perfect Diſpenſation was introduced. It was therefore to them as a *Schoolmaſter to bring them unto Chriſt.* Wherefore the ordinances of it are called *rudiments, weak and poor elements*, to which as *Children* they were confined, to ſecure them from other miſchievous effects, till they became capable of better things.

SERM. V.

Heb. ix. 10.

Gal. iii. 19.

Ver. 24.

Ver. 3.

Ib. iv. 9.

And

SERM. V.

And for theſe reaſons it was to be *changed, diſannulled for the weakneſs and unprofitableneſs of it*; becauſe it *made nothing perfect:* And as the Apoſtle obſerves in the *Text*, a new one was to be introduced in its room? *a better Covenant, eſtabliſhed upon better Promiſes.* As ſuch we receive the Goſpel. And as ſuch, it is neither reaſonable, or probable to ſuppoſe, that it *is wholly contained in the* Old Teſtament, or that *all the parts of it ſhould be prov'd thereby*, or *from* it could *have its Divine authority from thence.* It was promiſed, in general terms under the *Old Teſtament*, to be revealed; but it was not particularly revealed, till the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

Heb. vii. 12.
Ver. 18.
Ver. 19.
Ch. viii. 6.

How far we may be juſtified in receiving it as a *New Law* or *Covenant* properly ſo called (admitting the *Old One* likewiſe to be of God) will the better appear by conſidering, how far it is neceſſary, that a New Revelation ſhould agree with, or depend upon, a preceding One. It is indeed very reaſonable to believe, that all Revelations, coming from God, will ſo far have relation to each other, as to agree in the main Point: That the ultimate deſign of each ſhould be the Glory of God, and

and the Improvement of human Nature; that tho' differing in the Means, they ſhould centre in the End, and have a mutual, tho' not an equal, tendency to promote Vertue and Goodneſs, by which the Glory of God and the Good of Mankind are moſt effectually promoted. But that this great End, worthy of God and beneficial to Mankind, ſhould always be proſecuted by the ſame meaſures; or that the corruption of Mankind would always admit of the ſame Remedy; is neither neceſſary, nor probable. The wiſe Providence of God, acquainted with the various diſpoſitions and propenſities of our Nature, might (no doubt) ſee occaſion to vary his Methods, according to the particular circumſtances and temptations Men are ſubject to at particular times: and thereby be induced to uſe ſuch Means at preſent, as preſent circumſtances require and Mens capacities will admit of; and as Nature improves and higher Views preſent themſelves, former Methods may become uſeleſs, and new ones neceſſary for compaſſing thoſe higher Views. SERM. V.

From whence it will appear, That it is not neceſſary, that all the Doctrines of a new Revelation ſhould be found-

ed

SERM. V.

ed on, or be capable of being proved by a preceding one. For unleſs it has higher views, or (at leaſt) better methods for compaſſing the ſame views, it would be needleſs. So that 'tis eſſential to the very ſuppoſition of a New Revelation, that it ſhould make ſome new diſcoveries, beyond what were contained in, or revealed by, the preceding one. It is no leſs reaſonable to think, as the wiſe diſpenſations of Providence are ſuited to the tempers and circumſtances of Men; that many things once needful with regard to thoſe circumſtances, to which they were adapted, ſhould, as thoſe circumſtances alter, become needleſs, and conſequently be repealed. And therefore it is not neceſſary, that all the religious Inſtitutions, required by a preceding Revelation, ſhould be continued under a ſucceding one: but 'tis rather natural to expect, that many of them ſhould be repealed, and new ones ſubſtituted in their room.

All the foundation then, that a New Revelation need to have upon a preceding one, is, that the ſuppoſition of a New Revelation be not repugnant to, or inconſiſtent with, the declar'd deſign of the preceding one; and that it attempts

attempts to repeal nothing, which is in it ſelf, or was by that Revelation declared immutable. If the *New One* be thus far reconcileable with the *Old One*, then will it ſtand upon the ſame foot with a firſt fundamental Revelation, and will be capable of being confirmed and eſtabliſhed by the ſame methods. My buſineſs therefore at preſent ſhall be to ſhew, That the Chriſtian Revelation is in theſe reſpects fairly reconcileable with the *Jewiſh* Revelation, which it ſucceeded; which did both admit of a *New One* to ſucceed it, and of the repeal of ſeveral Laws and Ordinances inſtituted by it. SERM. V.

It is objected indeed, That the *Jews* believed *their Law to be eternal* *, and expected no New Inſtitution to ſucceed, or take place of it. And it may be ſo. We are not accountable for every notion embraced by them. This is not the only corrupt tradition they received, contrary to the *clear*, *expreſs* words and *natural* meaning of their own Scriptures. We are ready to prove, from paſſages of the *Old Teſtament*, taken in their *plain* and *obvious*, in their ſtrict and natural ſenſe, that their Law did admit of many alterations and of a *New Law*,

* Ibid. p. 34.

SERM. V.

Law, or *Covenant* to ſucceed it; which will, I hope, remove the objections of the *Jews* againſt the Chriſtian Doctrine; becauſe it tended to alter, or repeal the Laws and Cuſtoms delivered to them by *Moſes*.

To juſtify Chriſtianity in this reſpect was plainly the deſign of the Author of this Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*. Who, amongſt many other Arguments brought to prove, that the Law of *Moſes* was not unalterable, appeals to a paſſage of the Prophet *Jeremiah* (xxxi. 31, *&c.*) wherein a change thereof was in the plaineſt words foretold. The words are thoſe recited in the *Text*. *Behold, the days come, ſaith the Lord, when I will make a New Covenant with the houſe of* Iſrael *and the houſe of* Judah. *Not according to the Covenant, that I made with their fathers in the day, when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of* Ægypt. The Apoſtle's reaſoning from this citation is plain and obvious. *If that firſt Covenant had been faultleſs, then ſhould no place have been ſought for the ſecond.* That is, If it had been free from defect and inſufficiency, and could effectually have promoted the ends and purpoſes of true Religion; then it had been intirely needleſs

needleſs to have had recourſe to any new Method, or to have altered that, which could not be mended. Therefore he ſays in another place, *If there had been a law given, which could have given life, then verily righteouſneſs* (or juſtification) *had been by the law.* The Promiſe therefore of a *New Covenant*, as it ſuppoſed ſome defect or imperfection in the old one; ſo it implied a change or alteration of it. *For in that he ſaith a new Covenant* (ſays the Apoſtle) *he hath made the firſt old; now that which decayeth, or waxeth old, is ready to vaniſh away.* Nor can any thing be plainer, than that the Prophet ſpake of the Covenant, or Law given to the *Jews* by *Moſes*: that this Covenant ſhould ceaſe, and that a New one ſhould be eſtabliſhed in its room; in the room of that which God gave them, *when he took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of* Ægypt; in the room of that which they neglected, and they lived under no other. Nor was the *New One* to be the ſame in kind with it, *NOT ACCORDING to the Covenant, that I made with their Fathers.* The *Jews* therefore are in no wiſe juſtified in objecting againſt the Chriſtian Doctrine, that it tended *to change the*

SERM. V.

Gal. iii. 21.

Ver. 13.

SERM. V.

cuſtoms which Moſes *delivered to them. Moſes* never cautioned them againſt a Prophet, that ſhould make ſuch an attempt. Their own Prophets not only ſuggeſted to them, that there *might*, but alſo expreſsly told them that there *ſhould* be ſuch a change.

Whatever grounds therefore there might be to ſay of others, it could never be truly ſaid of the *Jewiſh* Revelation, That it was *far from intending a change, ingraftment, or new diſpenſation; that it forbid all alterations, or pretended to be the laſt diſpenſation intended* *. For beſides what is ſo poſitively aſſerted by *Jeremiah* in the words cited by our Apoſtle, the Prophet *Daniel* goes further, and fixes a time for the *bringing in everlaſting righteouſneſs*; that is, a Covenant which ſhould laſt for ever: intimating, that the Covenant which they then lived under, was not ſuch. And he further declares, that at the time when *Meſſiah* ſhould appear for that purpoſe, *He ſhould cauſe the ſacrifice and the oblation* (which were neceſſary parts of the *Old Covenant) to ceaſe*, The Prophet *Iſaiah* diſtinguiſhes this *New Law* or *Covenant* by the Univerſality of it; that whereas the firſt was

Iſa. ix. 24, 27.

* Ibid. p. 21.

was partial, directed to, and calculated for, the *Jewiſh* people only, in this *Gentiles* as well as *Jews* ſhould be included. SERM. V.

Many people ſhall go and ſay, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the houſe of the God of Jacob, *and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of* Zion *ſhall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from* Jeruſalem. Iſa. ii. 3. And afterwards we find him ſpeaking of a Perſon appointed *for a Covenant of the people, for a light of the* Gentiles. Ch. xlii. 6. And it it is ſaid, *The iſles ſhall wait for his Law.* Ver. 4. The Prophet *Malachi* calls him, *The Meſſenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in*; Ch. iii. 1. not of the *old Covenant*, that was *Moſes*, who was not expected; but of a *new and better Covenant*, for which reaſon they are ſaid *to delight in him.*

Theſe paſſages furniſh us with a ſatisfactory anſwer to the *Jews* objection againſt Chriſt, that he changed the cuſtoms delivered by *Moſes.* But we need not content our ſelves with this anſwer. Arguments many and clear and concluſive offer themſelves to juſtify all the alterations made by Chriſt with reſpect to the Law of *Moſes.* Arguments that will both juſtify the giving thoſe Laws at firſt, and the repeal of them after-

SERM. V.

wards. Arguments that will juſtify the wiſdom of repealing them, without derogating at all from the Immutability of God, who gave them. To give you as clear an idea as I am able of this matter, I ſhall enquire,

Firſt, What thoſe rites and cuſtoms were, which were repealed or changed by the Goſpel; whether they were in their nature alterable, and upon what reaſons they were firſt founded?

Secondly, I ſhall endeavour to prove, That the repeal of them, the time and manner of doing it, were entirely conſiſtent with the Wiſdom and Immutability of God, who gave them. And becauſe it may be objected from ſome paſſages of the *Old Teſtament*, that they are declared unalterable, I ſhall endeavour in the

Third and laſt place to prove, That according to the declared intent of the *Old Teſtament*, they might, and were to be altered.

Firſt, I am to enquire, What thoſe rites and cuſtoms were, which were changed or repealed by the Goſpel; whether they were in their nature alterable, and upon what Reaſons they were firſt founded. And here it is eaſily obſerved, by any one that reads the Goſpel,

Goſpel, that Chriſt never attempted to make any infringement upon the natural or moral Law. Every thing, that is in its own Nature good, that has any tendency to promote the Honour of God, the real Intereſt of Mankind in general, or the Perfection of human Nature, is ſtrictly required and inculcated by the Goſpel. Even a conformity in things indifferent, the practice whereof has no ſuch natural tendency, but may accidentally prove a means of peace, or of furthering ſome really good purpoſe, is thereby recommended to us. The Goſpel therefore cannot be ſaid to have diſannulled any thing, which may poſſibly be of ſervice to Mankind, either in a religious, or a civil capacity. All that can be urged, as repealed by the Goſpel, are things in their own nature indifferent; things that could not be acceptable to God for their own ſake; things merely external, which, as they had no relation to the worſhip and ſervice of a Spiritual Being, ſo neither had they any direct, or natural tendency to perfect, or improve human Nature.

SERM. V.

Conſider their ſacrifices, the ſeveral modes and rites of their publick worſhip: what was there in them, either

SERM. IV.

ſo agreeable to the Divine Nature, or ſo beneficial to the human, that they might not in any wiſe be aboliſhed? God does not eat the fleſh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats. He often aſſured the *Jews* by his Prophets, that he had *no pleaſure in them.* Different kinds of meats, and different ways of preparing them, may be agreeable to a ſenſual appetite; but what are theſe to a Spiritual Being, who has no carnal ſenſe or appetite to gratify? Had they any direct tendency then to make the worſhipper, that offered them, more perfect? Let any rational man be judge in this caſe; whether the blood of theſe ſacrifices could have any efficacy to take away ſins, or to purge the conſcience that was defiled? If at any time, by putting them in remembrance of ſin, they helped to raiſe in them an abhorrence of it, ſo far they were of ſervice; but this effect was rather accidental, than neceſſary; and we are ſure a much more effectual method to ſhew the odiouſneſs of ſin to God, his great diſpleaſure againſt it, and conſequently to raiſe in us a juſt abhorrence of it, has been contrived by the Goſpel. One may imagine of how little ſervice their ſacrifices were in this reſpect, when we read

read the complaints, which God makes by his Prophets of his moſt zealous Worſhippers this way. *To what purpoſe is the multitude of your ſacrifices unto me? I am full of* (that is, I nauſeate) *the burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beaſts. He that killeth an ox, is as if he ſlew a man; he that ſacrificeth a lamb, as he that cutteth off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered ſwines blood; he that burneth incenſe, as if he bleſſed an idol.* We ſhould have met with no ſuch complaints of this way of worſhip, if there had been any thing in it acceptable to God for its own ſake, or if there had been any good conſequences *neceſſarily* attending it. SERM. V.

Conſider next the Place appointed for this worſhip, there was no natural excellency in it. God himſelf had changed it under the *Jewiſh* diſpenſation. Beſides the whole world is God's, it was all created by him, and by his continual Preſence in every part of it he ſupports and preſerves it; nor can any place ſanctify the Man, but a Man may be holy and acceptable to God in any place. Conſider further that Tribe, or order of Men, appointed to miniſter in this place of worſhip. Were they,

SERM. V.

antecedently to that inſtitution, in any wiſe more worthy, or better qualified to ſtand before God in his houſe, than the reſt of their brethren? or might not any other Tribe with equal reaſon have been ſet apart for that purpoſe? and when they were ſo ſet apart, was it at all neceſſary, or eſſential to their office, that they ſhould wear that one particular ſort of apparel and no other? Of all theſe outward things, there is not one more acceptable to God than another. When they are required by God, then indeed the obſervance of them is neceſſary; neceſſary in obedience to him that commanded it, not for the ſake of the thing commanded. Thus the Caſe is repreſented by the Prophet, *I ſpake not* (ſays God) *to your fathers, nor commanded them concerning burnt-offerings and ſacrifices; but this thing commanded I them, ſaying, obey my voice.* This was all God had reſpect to in their Offerings, whether they were offered out of a principle of Obedience: for this was all that could render them acceptable to him; in every other reſpect he nauſeated, he deſpiſed them: and they, who obſerved them out of a ſuperſtitious fondneſs for the things

Jer. vii. 22.

things themſelves, inſtead of being ap- SERM.
proved, were ſeverely reprimanded. V.

According to all the rules therefore we have of judging, nay, according to the judgment of God too, theſe things had no inherent neceſſity obliging Men to the obſervance of them. And if their Obligation depended, as it certainly did, upon mere Inſtitution, the ſame Authority that inſtituted, might with equal reaſon repeal them; and when they are ſo repealed, the whole reaſon that made them obligatory before is entirely taken away, and they become again what they were at firſt, things indifferent. To ſay, that God has, or ever will, declare any Law null and void, which has a natural or neceſſary tendency to the good of Mankind, is an aſſertion that cannot be juſtified, neither ought it to be credited. But to ſay, that God may enact Laws about things in their own nature indifferent, and when he ſees fit, repeal thoſe Laws again, is only ſaying, that he may treat things indifferent as indifferent. It implies no contradiction to any known Attribute of God, it is not at all inconſiſtent with the nature and reaſon of things; but on the contrary, it is treating things according to their own nature.

Having

SERM. V.

Having ſaid ſo much of theſe rites and modes of worſhip, upon which the *Jews* laid the greateſt ſtreſs; I need ſay the leſs of their private ordinances, which conſiſted in a diſtinction of meats and drinks, in outward purifications and waſhings, and other cuſtoms not reſpecting Religion, but civil Life: which depended upon circumſtances peculiar to that People at that time, and not upon any inherent goodneſs in the things themſelves. For how is a Man the better or the worſe for what he eats or drinks; ſo he does it with Moderation and Temperance, for Health and not for Senſuality? All the Creatures of God were declared from the firſt to be good, and were given Man for his uſe and ſervice. There is certainly no difference in a moral ſenſe between the Fruits of the third and thoſe of the fifth year. Nor is a Man the better, let the hair of his head or beard be cut in what form it will. Yet in theſe and many like caſes they were required to make a difference; Laws they had to regulate their conduct in theſe reſpects; which no Man of any judgment or impartiality would ever reckon irrepealable; and in my opinion, they who contend for the perpetuity of ſuch laws, are

are ſo far from doing any credit to that Religion, that they cannot by any other imputation render its authority more ſuſpected. SERM. V.

For, conſider theſe Laws as founded upon temporary motives, ariſing from the particular circumſtances of the *Jewiſh* People, at the time of their delivery; and ſo a rational account may be given of their inſtitution, and they may be juſtified upon principles conſonant to the Wiſdom of God who gave them. But conſider them as Laws, which may upon no account be abrogated, and it will not be eaſy to account for them, but upon the principles of mere Superſtition. The repeal of them therefore was ſo far from being inconſiſtent with the character of a true Prophet, that (all circumſtances conſider'd) nothing could be more reaſonable, than that they ſhould be repealed. And I believe an indifferent judge in this caſe would be more apt to queſtion the inſtitution of ſuch Laws by Divine Authority, than the repeal of them. And the better able any Man is to account for their inſtitution, the more plainly he will perceive the reaſonableneſs of their repeal.

Now in order to diſcover the Motives, upon which theſe Laws were founded,

SERM. V.

founded, it will be neceſſary to know in ſome meaſure the temper and circumſtances of the *Jewiſh* people at the time, when theſe Laws were given. They were a people extremely prone to idolatry and ſuperſtition. For this reaſon we find *Moſes*, in every diſcourſe, and upon every occaſion, cautioning them againſt following other Gods. They had lived a long time in *Ægypt*, where probably they had learned, and were grown fond of, many of their ſuperſtitious cuſtoms. They were encompaſſed likewiſe with idolatrous nations on every ſide, whoſe Religion conſiſted of outward ſhew and pageantry. It was thought therefore (and that very juſtly, as appeared by the event) that all poſſible methods, which could be uſed, would be little enough to ſecure them on this weak ſide. And therefore to humour them as far as reaſonably it might be done, in their ſuperſtitious diſpoſition, in order to preſerve them from a much worſe miſcarriage; God indulged them with a great many needleſs Rites and Ceremonies; which, as they had no inherent goodneſs in them, ſo neither were they of any evil tendency. And all the external parts of worſhip were therefore ordered with as much

much coſtlineſs and pomp and ſolem- SERM.
nity, as might probably win upon their V.
ſuperſtitious diſpoſitions, and keep
them from admiring and growing fond
of the Rites and Cuſtoms of their hea-
then neighbours. This was the real
Motive, why ſo much outward form
and Ceremony was admitted into the
worſhip of a Spiritual Being, who
could never be ſuppoſed to take delight
in it for its own ſake. This Motive
(though a very juſt one) was but tem-
porary, ariſing accidentally from the
particular diſpoſition and circumſtances
of the *Jewiſh* people, for whoſe ſake
theſe outward pompous forms of wor-
ſhip were inſtituted.

Aud as their religious, ſo their civil ordinances may be accounted for upon the ſame obſervation. For being invi-roned with idolatrous nations, to keep them more effectually from a compli-ance with them, it was thought neceſ-ſary by all proper Methods to keep them ſeparate. One Method was, by forbidding them to eat as the *Heathen* did. This occaſioned their Laws about diſtinction of Meats, things clean and unclean. And ſo many ſorts of crea-tures and other things were by this Law declared unclean, that it was next

to

SERM. V.

to impoſſible for them to eat with the *Heathen* without being defiled. This was the declared deſign of God in giving thoſe Laws, to keep them ſeparate from the *Heathen*, as appears *Lev.* xx. 24, 25. *I am the Lord your God, which have ſeparated you from other people, ye ſhall therefore put difference between clean beaſts and unclean.* And with the ſame view many other things indifferent in themſelves were forbidden them. They were prohibited to *round the corners of their heads, to wear a garment mixed of linnen and woollen*, to ſow divers ſeeds in the ſame ground; becauſe thoſe were ſuperſtitions had in regard by their heathen neighbours. And by the ſtrict forbidding of them, it was intended, to break off intercourſe and familiarity with them, and to beget in them an habitual prejudice againſt their idolatrous cuſtoms. And we find this reaſon often ſubjoined to precepts of this kind, *That ye may be holy unto the Lord, being ſevered from other people.* We ſee therefore, that theſe and the like precepts of the ceremonial Law were not founded upon the goodneſs of the things themſelves, nor upon any immutable Reaſons; but upon Motives peculiar to that People, and to thoſe

thoſe Times, when and for whom they were inſtituted. Which Motives, as they were ſufficient to juſtify their firſt inſtitution, will furniſh us with a good Argument to juſtify the repeal of them, now they are ceaſed. Which brings me to prove.

Secondly, That the Repeal of them, the Time and Manner of doing it, were intirely conſiſtent with the Wiſdom and Immutability of God, who firſt gave them. Beſides the natural and neceſſary differences of things, upon which are founded Laws of an immutable nature that cannot be altered or repealed, becauſe founded upon Motives that are unalterable: there are alſo accidental circumſtances common to human life, which at different times, as circumſtances vary, require a different conduct. In the firſt of theſe caſes to alter one's conduct, the Reaſons and Motives to Action continuing the ſame, argues imprudence and want of ſtable principles in one, or the other part of ſuch conduct. But to alter one's conduct, as circumſtances alter, is not only an Act of the greateſt prudence and judgment, but is conſiſtent with the greateſt ſteadineſs. It is prudent when a houſe is ſeized with an infectious diſtemper

SERM. V.

ſtemper to abſent one's ſelf from it; but when that houſe is freed from that infectious diſeaſe, I may frequent it as uſual, without imputation of imprudence or mutability. This inſtance is eaſily applicable to the *Jews*, and the inſtitution of their ceremonial Law. There certainly was from the beginning no natural Law obliging any race or family of Men, to keep themſelves diſtinct and ſeparate from the reſt of the world; nor any particular Laws inſtituted, to render that ſeparation more ſtrict and effectual: but all Men, as of one nature and one family, were by that nature obliged to aſſociate and maintain friendly correſpondence with each other. But the groſs infection of Idolatry overſpreading the world to ſuch a degree, that the worſhip of the One true God was almoſt confined to one particular family; and that family but too much inclined to fall in with the reſt of the world; it ſeemed expedient to infinite Wiſdom, in order to prevent ſo ill an effect, to guard and fence his peculiar people with ſuch Laws and Ordinances, as beſt ſuited their then preſent circumſtances; and that would, during that general contagion

tagion, ſecure them moſt effectually from it. SERM. V.

This, as I have already ſhewn, was the true ground and motive, of thoſe many Rites and Ceremonies, which are to be met with in the *Jewiſh* Religion. And ſo long as the Motives continued, upon which they were inſtituted, ſo long as they lived in the midſt of idolatrous neighbours, it was reaſonable to believe, that their obligation ſhould laſt; and an attempt to repeal them might juſtly have been ſuſpected. But when a New Diſpenſation was introduced, tending to a general Reformation; when the Converſion of the *Gentile* world, ſo frequently promiſed, was about to be compleated, and had been begun with very good ſucceſs; the danger of that idolatrous contagion, which was the very Reaſon, nay, the only Motive, why thoſe ceremonial Laws were given, was removed: the whole Reaſon therefore of their inſtitution ceaſing, the inſtitution it ſelf ought in Reaſon to ceaſe, and in my opinion became void on courſe. For why ſhould it be thought a thing inconſiſtent with Infinite Wiſdom, to make temporary Laws, where the Motives for making them are but tempo-

SERM. V.

rary? Is it ever reckoned prudence in Men to make no difference between things neceſſary, and things merely circumſtantial? If preventive phyſick ſhould be thought proper in times of infection, will therefore any conſiderate Man continue the uſe of it, when all danger of infection is removed? What if an able Phyſician did preſcribe it? Yet when the whole reaſon of his preſcription ceaſes, it is acting againſt his judgment, to continue the uſe of it. All things, appointed for a certain end, ought to be directed to that end, and that only: when they are otherwiſe applied, they are not only improper, but unacceptable. And it is impoſſible they ſhould be applied to the end intended, when that end ceaſes to require them.

How then can the Repeal of the ceremonial Law caſt any reflection upon the Wiſdom or Immutability of God? Were there the ſame reaſons for continuing it, when the Goſpel had been preached to all the world as there were for the firſt inſtitution of it? Did God change his Method till the Motives changed? Would it have been at all conſiſtent with his Wiſdom, to have made perpetual Laws upon temporary Motives?

Motives? Let not the *Jews* therefore ſay, that we charge God with want of wiſdom, or ſteadineſs, or that we attribute any thing to him inconſiſtent with thoſe Perfections: they are the real Authors of the charge. They ſay the ſame God, who firſt inſtituted certain wiſe and good Laws upon good grounds, has continued thoſe Laws upon no grounds at all. They ſay, that God, who gave thoſe Laws with regard to the circumſtances of Men, has yet, without regard to the alteration of thoſe circumſtances, made them irrepealable. They ſay, that God now delights in things for their own ſake, which he often declared to be no delight to him. For thoſe ritual ordinances have now nothing elſe to recommend them, but their own inherent worth: if God therefore now approves them, it muſt be for their own ſake; and if ſo, God is changed. SERM. V.

You plainly ſee therefore, that the Repeal of temporary Laws, when the End of their inſtitution ceaſes, is ſo far from reflecting upon the Wiſdom or Immutability of God, that it is a reflection thereupon to ſuppoſe them irrepealable. The ceremonial Laws I have already proved to have been of

SERM. V.

this nature. The Reaſon of their inſtitution, *viz.* their living amidſt idolatrous neighbours, is ceaſed; a common Covenant including all nations is eſtabliſhed, and therefore all Laws of ſeparation and diſtinction ought to be taken away. And what Prophet could be thought more proper to declare this Repeal than he, who came to remove the Cauſe of its firſt inſtitution? Or when could be a more proper time to declare all Laws of ſeparation void, than that, wherein *Jew* and *Gentile* were to be brought under one *Covenant*; when *the glory of the Lord was to be revealed to all people, and all nations were to ſee it together?* Can this therefore be an objection againſt Chriſt, which ſeems ſo proper, ſo neceſſary to have been done by him? To ſay, that Chriſt was not a true Prophet, though he had all the marks and tokens of his being ſuch, becauſe he attempted to repeal theſe Laws, is in effect to ſay, that they were irrepealable. And to ſay, that theſe Laws were irrepealable, is to make things dependent on circumſtances, independent; reſpective things abſolute; things, that are proper only under ſome circumſtances, neceſſary under all circumſtances. *I will not

not inlarge on this head; I have ſaid more than enough to juſtify the Repeal of theſe Laws, nay, to juſtify the non-obſervance of them, though they had not been expreſsly repealed. I ſhall therefore proceed in the SERM. V.

Third and laſt place to prove, in anſwer to ſome paſſages objected from the *Old Teſtament*, That according to the declared intent of the *Old Teſtament* theſe Laws were to be repealed or altered. There are ſeveral places, where parts of the ceremonial Law are ſaid to be *ſtatutes for ever*. *Aaron* and his ſons are ſaid to be ſet apart for the ſervice of the Tabernacle, *by an ordinance for ever*. The method inſtituted for making Atonement is called *an everlaſting ſtatute*. And many other paſſages of like nature are to be met with. But the only difficulty ariſing from them is removed by the general conſent of all (*Jews* as well as other Perſons) who have well conſidered the uſe of this term *for ever* in the *Old Teſtament*. Where, beſides a real perpetuity, it is often uſed to ſignify a limited, but indefinite duration; and ſeldom a real perpetuity, but where the ſubject it is annexed to requires it. *Hannah* ſays, that ſhe 1 Sam. i. 22.

SERM. V.

would bring her Son, that he might *appear before the Lord for ever. David* ſays, *I will abide in thy Tabernacle for ever.* In theſe places the duration intended muſt neceſſarily be limited to the lives of theſe perſons. And ſo muſt all Laws peculiarly adapted to a particular Diſpenſation, be limited to the continuance of that Diſpenſation. All their ceremonial Laws conſidered them as a ſeparate people, were given with an intent to keep them ſeparate, and conſequently whilſt they continued in that ſtate, were conſtantly to be obſerved by them; and were not to be diſuſed, upon their ſettlement in the Land of *Canaan*, as many Laws were, reſpecting only their continuance in the wilderneſs. Yet ſtill 'twas evident they were to have an End, becauſe the Diſpenſation to which they were adapted, was not intended to continue always. Even before that Diſpenſation was granted) there was an expreſs Promiſe made of one more general, wherein *Gentiles* as well as *Jews* were to be included. That Diſpenſation being granted, the *Jews* could no longer be conſidered as a peculiar people, and conſequently the Laws, which conſider'd 'em as ſuch, could be of no longer force.

Pſal. lxi. 4.

Gen. xxii. 18.

If,

If, according to the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the words, none but *Aaron* and his poſterity were to miniſter before the Lord *for ever*; then there could not have ariſen (according to *David*'s prediction) another Prieſt, not of *Aaron*'s, but of *Melchiſedec*'s order. And if the old ritual way of worſhip had been to be continued always; then a Prieſt of another order had been unneceſſary and inconſiſtent with the Law; which expreſsly limited the ſervice of the Tabernacle and Temple to thoſe of *Aaron*'s order. And therefore, as the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* juſtly argues, a change of the Prieſthood neceſſarily inferred a change of the Laws relating to it. I obſerve farther, that the old ritual worſhip was confined to a certain place. And is it probable, that a way of worſhip thus limited ſhould be continued, when all nations ſhould turn to the Lord? Or is it not much more probable, as the Prophet *Malachi* obſerves, That *in every place* Men ſhould offer unto God *a pure offering*, that is, an offering which ſhould be accepted, though not performed at *Jeruſalem*? Again, after that general converſion, ſo plainly and frequently promiſed in the *Old Teſtament*, is it probable that

SERM. V.

Heb. vii. 12.

Mal. i. 11.

SERM. V.

the Sons of *Levi* only ſhould miniſter before him? Or is it not more probable, as the Prophet *Iſaiah* obſerves, that God would take out of all nations perſons to miniſter before him, that is, the prophetick phraſe *for Prieſts and for Levites?* Or what greater outward Proof could be given, that God intended to be worſhipped no more in that ritual manner, than by deſtroying, as ſoon as the Goſpel had been generally preached throughout the world, their City and Sanctuary, and leaving them from that time to this deſtitute of a Temple, and Sacrifices, and perſons legally qualified to miniſter therein? According to the Prophecy of *Daniel*, who ſays, that when *Meſſiah* ſhould come to fulfil the Purpoſes of his Prophecy, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs, he ſhould *cauſe the ſacrifice and the oblation to ceaſe*.

Iſa. lxvi. 22.

Dan. ix. 24, &c.

All theſe things conſidered, there can remain no doubt or difficulty about the Repeal of thoſe legal Ordinances. They were Laws in their own nature repealable; the End of their Inſtitution is ceaſed, and therefore they ought to be repealed; the Continuance of them would

would be a thing abſurd and next to impoſſible, contrary to the declared intent of the *Old Teſtament*, and inconſiſtent with the Wiſdom of God, who gave them. SERM. V.

Thus far therefore we are able, with the concurrent ſuffrage of reaſon and the writings of the *Old Teſtament*, to juſtify our Religion conſidered as a *New Law*, not only diſtinct from, but repealing many things required under, the Diſpenſation granted by *Moſes*. So far is it from being true, that the legal Covenant was intended to laſt always, that it appears from the plaineſt and cleareſt paſſages of the *Old Teſtament*, that it was both alterable and intended to be altered; that it was to be ſucceeded by a new Diſpenſation quite different from it, *and not according to the Covenat made with the* Iſraelites, when they came out of the Land of *Egypt*. And it appears further, that all the alterations made in that firſt Covenant by the ſecond are juſtifiable, not only upon the principles of Reaſon, but by the *Old Teſtament* likewiſe; whereby from paſſages appealed to, in their *ſtrict and natural*, not in any *typical or ſecondary*, ſenſe, it is fairly and ſtrictly proved, that ſuch alterations were intended,

SERM. V.

tended, and might reaſonably have been expected. This being proved, the Goſpel has as good foundation upon the *Old Teſtament* as any New Revelation need to have upon a preceding one. This proves them to be fairly conſiſtent with one another; that they are not in an *irreconcileable ſtate*, as they have been repreſented; that no juſt exception can be made againſt the *New* for changing or repealing any thing eſtabliſhed under the *Old Covenant*; ſince all Alterations made by the *New* are agreeable to the plain expreſs Declarations of the *Old*, and as far as could reaſonably be expected, are juſtified thereby.

SERMON VI.

CHRISTIANITY juſtified by the *Old Teſtament.*

LUKE XXIV. 25, 26.

Then he ſaid unto them, O fools, and ſlow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have ſpoken! Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his Glory?

IT is ſurprizing to conſider, not only how groſsly the Scriptures have been corrupted by the Traditions of Men profeſſing to embrace thoſe Scriptures; but alſo that honeſt, well-meaning Men have been miſ-led by thoſe corrupt Traditions, and hardly weaned from, tho' the Scriptures plainly contradict their traditionary Notions. We have a remarkable Inſtance of this inconſiſtency between Scripture and Tradition in the Caſe

SERM. VI.

Caſe now before us. The Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament* ſpeak as clearly and expreſsly of the *Meſſiah*'s ſuffering, as of his triumphant ſtate; in the very ſelf-ſame Propheſies we meet with both theſe parts of his character. And yet when our Bleſſed Lord appear'd, we find the ſuffering part ſo generally diſbelievd, that it became a prevailing prejudice againſt him, and paſſed as a ſufficient argument to convince them, that he could not be the *Meſſiah* promiſed in thoſe Scriptures. Not only the *Jews* in general but even his own Diſciples were tinctured with this Prejudice; and therefore he took great Pains to prepare them againſt the ſhock, by frequently diſcourſing with them about his approaching Paſſion. When they confeſſed him to be the Chriſt, leſt that ſhould ſwell them with a Notion of becoming great by his means, he began to ſhew them what ſhould befall him at *Jeruſalem*, how he ſhould *ſuffer many things of the elders, and chief prieſts and ſcribes, and be killed.* When they had ſeen his Glory upon the Mount, had heard his Miſſion confirmed by a Voice from Heaven, and were come down full (no doubt) of great expectations from him, he reaſſum'd the ſame ſubject,

Mat xvi. 21.

ſubject, and told them, *The ſon of man ſhall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they ſhall kill him.* On his laſt journey to *Jeruſalem*, he put them again in mind of the ſame thing; and juſt before he was apprehended, when they were making attempts to reſcue him, he told them he muſt ſuffer, or otherwiſe the Scriptures could not be fulfilled. And yet how little effect had all this upon them! ſo confounded were they at his ſufferings, that (notwithſtanding they had been witneſſes to the integrity of his Life, the purity of his Doctrine, and the Miracles that had been continually wrought by him) their ſpirits ſunk at once, they forſook him, and began to deſpair, of that which they had once firmly believed, that he was the Perſon *who ſhould redeem* Iſrael. Yea, though they had been told by the Women, who had been early at his Sepulchre the third day after his Crucifixion, that his Body did not remain in the Grave, that they had ſeen a viſion of Angels, who declared him riſen; yet *Their words ſeemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.*

SERM. VI.

Ch. xvii. 22.

And in this temper did their Maſter find them, when he joined himſelf to two of them that were walking into the

SERM. VI. the country, and diſcourſing on this ſubject. Upon which he could not help upbraiding them with their ignorance and diſbelief of their own Scriptures; wherein the ſuffering part, with which they were offended, was revealed in the plaineſt words imaginable, and ſpoken of as antecedent to the ſucceſsful and more triumphant part of his character. *O fools, and ſlow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have ſpoken; Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his glory.*

But if the Caſe were, as it is repreſented, that there is no clear Propheſy relating to this, or any other, part of the *Meſſiah*'s character; if the Propheſies appealed to on this occaſion were ſuch, as in their obvious ſenſe related to other matters, and could not, but in ſome *ſecondary, or typical, or allegorical ſenſe* be applied to Chriſt; there could have been no juſt ground for this ſevere reproof, nor for that ſharp queſtion, *Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered?* This does not ſound like an appeal to any *hidden myſtical meaning* of words, that in their *plain and obvious ſenſe* ſignified a very different thing: one would rather take it at firſt reading to be an appeal to the common ſenſe of Men; ſuppoſing

ſuppoſing the paſſages appealed to ſo plain and full to the purpoſe, that they could not eaſily be miſunderſtood, or miſapplied. SERM. VI.

What paſſages they were, or what Propheſies were cited by our Bleſſed Lord on this occaſion, the Evangeliſt has not told us. Had they been of an abſtruſe myſtical kind, ſuch as needed ſome *typical or enigmatical* conſtruction to make them applicable to the purpoſe, for which they were cited, they would (no doubt) have been particularly recited. But we rather judge from this omiſſion, that they were both eaſily diſcovered, and as eaſily applied by a ſincere impartial mind; for which reaſon the Evangeliſt thought it needleſs, either to recite them, or to ſhew in what manner they were applied by our Bleſſed Lord.

What Prejudices the *Jews* were poſſeſſed with, what Traditions they had entertained in contradicton to Chriſt's ſuffering Condition, or how prevailing theſe Traditions were, is no concern of us Chriſtians. Our buſineſs is to ſhew, that Chriſtianity has a juſt foundation on the *Old Teſtament*, that no good objection can be alledged againſt us from the writings of the ancient Prophets; not

SERM. VI.

not even againſt this very offenſive part of our Saviour's character, his low and ſuffering Condition. And had this part of the *Meſſiah*'s character remained wholly undiſcovered, till his appearing; had there been no preceding Revelation declaring, that he ought to ſuffer; had the *Old Teſtament* been wholly ſilent about his outward State and Condition in this Life; poſſibly the *Jews* might have triumphed more upon the ſtrength of their Tradition, and probably but few of them would have been beat out of a notion ſo very pleaſing and agreeable to their wiſhes; poſſibly too *the wiſe of this world*, carnal reaſoners, *uſing maxims of reaſoning and diſputing wholly oppoſite to thoſe of Chriſtians*, might have reckon'd the Doctrine of the Croſs, fooliſhneſs: and judged *a mere ſpiritual deliverance*, a deliverance from ignorance, ſuperſtition, idolatry, ſin and the conſequences of it, as a trifle, in compariſon of a REAL or TEMPORAL deliverance. Yet I am of opinion, that ſome Men of judgment and impartiality, conſidering how expedient it was that a Reformer of the world ſhould appear in a low and ſuffering Condition; how many good Ends and Purpoſes are propoſed to be ſerved

ſerved thereby; would have thought the ſufferings he underwent fairly reconcileable with the character he took upon him, though the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament* had made no mention thereof. But this is not the caſe. Thoſe Scriptures are not ſilent on this head; they not only ſuppoſe, that poſſibly he might, but declare poſitively, that he ſhould ſuffer many things, be rejected and ſet at naught, and at laſt put to death. So expreſs and clear are they in this particular, that if Chriſt had not ſuffered, he could not have been the *Meſſiah* promiſed therein: had his outward ſtate and condition been ſuch, as the *Jews* flattered themſelves with the expectation of, he might have deceived many of them; but they could have had no good grounds to have received him as their *Meſſiah*. SERM. VI.

I ſhall endeavour therefore in this diſcourſe to ſhew, that the ſuffering Condition of the *Meſſiah* was expreſsly foretold by the Prophets under the *Old Teſtament*, and that in paſſages applicable to none but him. Whereby I hope to remove another great objection of the *Jews* againſt our Saviour; and to confute that groſs reflection caſt upon Chriſtianity, That *there is not any*

SERM. VI.

Prophecy cited from the Old *in the* New Teſtament, *which does by any neceſſary expoſition reſpect the* Meſſiah, *but does in its obvious and primary ſenſe relate to other matters, than thoſe to which they are applied by Chriſt and his Apoſtles.* The falſity of this ſuggeſtion will very plainly appear in the inſtance now before us: the ſufferings of the *Meſſiah* being ſpoken of in ſo particular and ſo ſtrict a manner, that the characters will not ſuit any other Perſon or Event whatſoever.

The liid and liiid Chapters of *Iſaiah* are very full and clear in this particular: therefore they are frequently cited by the Apoſtles in the *New Teſtament*. I need not mention the places where they are cited; they muſt frequently occur to the diligent Reader. And here we have a full deſcription of a very extraordinary Perſon ſuffering in a very grievous manner. How well the deſcription ſuits our Bleſſed Lord will appear by comparing the words of the Prophecy with the hiſtory given of him by the Evangeliſts.

They give us a particular account of his low and deſtitute Condition; that he was born of mean Parents, bred up to the ſervile employment of a Carpenter;

ter; that, after he entred upon his publick Miniſtry, he had no certain dwelling-place, and was generally obliged to others for the neceſſary ſupports of life. The Prophet *Iſaiah* ſays, *He ſhall grow up as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comelineſs, and when we ſhall ſee him there is no beauty, that we ſhould deſire him.* Meaning, that he ſhould have none of the outward ornaments of wealth and worldy greatneſs, to procure the reſpect and eſteem of them that ſaw him. The contempt and diſgrace he fell under through the meaneſs of his Condition, being often reproached in ſuch expreſſions as theſe, *Is not this the Carpenter's Son? Can any good thing come out of* Nazareth? *Out of* Galilee *ariſeth no Prophet:* This ſcornful treatment of him is likewiſe foretold by the Prophet, *He is deſpiſed and rejected of men — we hid as it were our faces from him; he was deſpiſed, and we eſteemed him not.* The ſufferings and ill treatment and perſecutions he endured, are alſo expreſſed in the words of this Prophecy. *He was oppreſſed and he was afflicted. A Man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief.* The unjuſt and ignominious death he ſuffered, not by natural, but

SERM. VI.

Ch. liii. 2.

Ver. 3.

Ver. 7.

Ver. 3.

SERM. VI.

by violent means) is alſo very particularly ſpoken of in this place. *He was taken from priſon, and from judgment,* or as the *Septuagint* renders it, *in his humiliation his judgment was taken away.*

Ver. 8.

Ver. 12. *He was numbered with the tranſgreſſors.*

Ver. 7. *He was brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter.*

Ver. 8. *He was cut off out of the land of the living.* What death could more fully anſwer the Prophet's deſcription, than that which our Bleſſed Lord endured? That many ſhould be offended in him by reaſon of his ſufferings, particularly the *Jews*, which was undoubtedly his caſe, is no leſs clearly foretold in this Prophecy. *Many were aſtoniſhed at him, his Viſage was ſo marred. Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?*

Iſa. lii. 14.

Ib. liii. 1.

Ver. 4. *We did eſteem him ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and afflicted.*

Yet we find in this very Prophecy the ſame afflicted Perſon repreſented as riſing out of all his ſufferings into a ſtate of Glory and Triumph. Of him, whoſe Viſage was ſo marred, that many were aſtoniſhed at him, it is ſaid, *He ſhall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. Kings ſhall ſhut their mouths at him.* Even after he ſhould make his Soul an offering for ſin, it is ſaid,

Ib. lii. 13.

Ver. 15.

He

He ſhall ſee his ſeed, he ſhall prolong his days, and the pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hands. And *becauſe* he poured out his Soul unto death, it is ſaid, *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he ſhall divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong.* So well does this part of the Prophecy agree with Chriſt's Reſurrection, and the ſucceſs of his Doctrine afterwards, that it is impoſſible to conceive, how it ſhould be fulfilled, but in one that was put to death, and was afterwards raiſed again. In ſhort, there is no part of the Prophecy, but what exactly agrees with the character and circumſtances of our Bleſſed Lord. He was in all reſpects ſuch a Perſon, as is here deſcribed. In his Life upright and inoffenſive, as the Prophet ſays, *He had done no violence, neither was any deceit found in his mouth.* In his ſufferings meek and patient, *As a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo he openeth not his mouth.*

SERM. VI.

Ver. 10.

Ver. 12.

Ver. 9.

Ver. 7.

As the ſeveral parts of this Prophecy therefore were literally fulfilled in Chriſt, it remains to be conſidered, whether we have any good reaſons to apply it to the *Meſſiah* only; or whether it be not applicable to ſome other perſon. That it relates to ſome extra-

SERM. VI.

ordinary Prophet, who ſhould do ſome things, far beyond what was ever pretended to be done by any Prophet under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, or ever attributed to the very greateſt of them, is plain from many characters to be met with therein. He was not only *to bring good tidings, to publiſh Peace and Salvation*; but through him *all the ends of the earth were to ſee the Salvation of God.* He was *to ſprinkle or purify many nations: the Kings ſhould ſhut their mouths at him*, that is, give attention to his words. *By his ſtripes we are* ſaid to be *healed.* He was *to make his Soul an offering for ſin; to juſtify many by bearing their iniquities*, and *to make interceſſion for tranſgreſſors.* Theſe are unuſual characters, not applicable to any ordinary Prophet. By them we underſtand, that God intended, and had declared before-hand, that he would ſend ſuch a Perſon into the world, as we believe Chriſt to be; One who ſhould bring good tidings, whoſe Salvation ſhould be manifeſt to all the world; to whom not only *Jews*, but Kings and Nations ſhould give ear, and lay to heart the Doctrine revealed by him; One who ſhould ſuffer for our ſins, take our guilt upon him, make interceſſion

Iſa. li. 7. Ver. 10. Ver. 15. Iſa. liii. 5. Ver. 10. Ver. 11. Ver. 12.

to

to God for us, and by his ſufferings heal or ſave us. This is the very notion we Chriſtians have of a *Meſſiah*, and every Man that has common Senſe muſt allow, that this notion is eſtabliſhed by the Prophecy now before us. This is the *expreſs*, *obvious*, *clear meaning* of it. SERM. VI.

It is therefore abſolutely falſe to ſay, that our Notion of a *Meſſiah* to come, who ſhould redeem Men from their ſins, is founded upon mere *Jewiſh* tradition: for it is plainly founded upon the cleareſt Prophecy in all the *Old Teſtament*. We own the *Jewiſh* Notion of a *Meſſiah* was founded upon mere tradition; but what is that to us? We ſay that their tradition has deceived them: and they cannot but be ſenſible it has ſo; for the time in which they expected him is many ages ſince elapſed, yet have they had no *Meſſiah* according to their traditionary ſcheme, and they may ſtill look for ſuch a one in vain.

But let us conſider, how they endeavour to get clear of this Prophecy, wherein our Notion of a *Meſſiah* is ſo plainly eſtabliſhed in oppoſition to theirs. Here is certainly ſomething promiſed of very great importance;

SERM. VI.

ſomething foretold, though very grievous and afflicting to the perſon, who ſhould bear the principal part therein, yet very advantageous to men, who are to be healed by his ſtripes, to be deliver'd from the guilt and puniſhment of their ſins, by his bearing their iniquities and making interceſſion to God for them. The promiſe of ſuch a deliverance, as this, one would think ſhould be of more importance to us, and conſequently have more of our attention, and deſerve better the name of a REAL deliverance, than any temporal one, that could be propoſed to us. Since therefore they have rejected our Bleſſed Lord, as employ'd by God for this purpoſe, Let them ſay to whom, or to what event this Prophecy does refer? Is it ſpoken of the *Meſſiah*, or of ſome other? Has it been already compleated, or does it remain ſtill unfilled? It is certain, notwithſtanding the plainneſs of the Prophecy, they are not well agreed what anſwer to give us (I mean thoſe *Jews*, that have conſidered it ſince the coming of our Saviour, for before it was generally applied to the *Meſſiah*:) but ſince a great deal of pains has been uſed to give it ſome new turn, to make it applicable to any thing, but

but the *Meſſiah*; and yet they have not given one, which near comes up to the *expreſs words, or natural meaning* of the Prophecy. SERM. VI.

Some have told us, that it was intended to be a prophetic deſcription of the ſufferings of the *Jews* under the *Babyloniſh*, or ſome other captivity, and of the effects conſequent thereupon: And that God ſpeaks here, as is uſual in the prophetic ſtyle, of a whole people under the perſon of one man. But this notion is ſo contrary to the whole ſcope of the Prophecy, that it hardly deſerves an anſwer. It is rather a direct contradiction to, than a rational interpretation of, the words of the Prophet. The ſuffering perſon here deſcribed, inſtead of repreſenting the *Jewiſh* people, is repreſented as ſuffering through and for them. *We* hid as it were our Faces from him, ſays the Prophet (ſpeaking in their perſon) *he* was deſpiſed and *we* eſteem'd him not. *He* was wounded for *our* tranſgreſſions, *he* was bruiſed for *our* iniquities: the chaſtiſement of *our* peace was upon *him*, and by *his* ſtripes *we* are healed. Here are two diſtinct characters, that plainly reſpect different perſons; on the one hand, a perſon greatly

SERM. VI. ſomething foretold, though very grievous and afflicting to the perſon, who ſhould bear the principal part therein, yet very advantageous to men, who are to be healed by his ſtripes, to be deliver'd from the guilt and puniſhment of their ſins, by his bearing their iniquities and making interceſſion to God for them. The promiſe of ſuch a deliverance, as this, one would think ſhould be of more importance to us, and conſequently have more of our attention, and deſerve better the name of a REAL deliverance, than any temporal one, that could be propoſed to us. Since therefore they have rejected our Bleſſed Lord, as employ'd by God for this purpoſe, Let them ſay to whom, or to what event this Prophecy does refer? Is it ſpoken of the *Meſſiah*, or of ſome other? Has it been already compleated, or does it remain ſtill unfilled? It is certain, notwithſtanding the plainneſs of the Prophecy, they are not well agreed what anſwer to give us (I mean thoſe *Jews*, that have conſidered it ſince the coming of our Saviour, for before it was generally applied to the *Meſſiah*:) but ſince a great deal of pains has been uſed to give it ſome new turn, to make it applicable to any thing, but

but the *Meſſiah*; and yet they have not given one, which near comes up to the *expreſs words, or natural meaning* of the Prophecy. SERM. VI.

Some have told us, that it was intended to be a prophetic deſcription of the ſufferings of the *Jews* under the *Babyloniſh*, or ſome other captivity, and of the effects conſequent thereupon: And that God ſpeaks here, as is uſual in the prophetic ſtyle, of a whole people under the perſon of one man. But this notion is ſo contrary to the whole ſcope of the Prophecy, that it hardly deſerves an anſwer. It is rather a direct contradiction to, than a rational interpretation of, the words of the Prophet. The ſuffering perſon here deſcribed, inſtead of repreſenting the *Jewiſh* people, is repreſented as ſuffering through and for them. *We* hid as it were our Faces from him, ſays the Prophet (ſpeaking in their perſon) *he* was deſpiſed and *we* eſteem'd him not. *He* was wounded for *our* tranſgreſſions, *he* was bruiſed for *our* iniquities: the chaſtiſement of *our* peace was upon *him*, and by *his* ſtripes *we* are healed. Here are two diſtinct characters, that plainly reſpect different perſons; on the one hand, a perſon greatly

SERM. VI.

greatly deſpiſed; on the other, the perſons deſpiſing him; one wounded and bruiſed, not for his own tranſgreſſions, but for the iniquities of others; and theſe latter healed with the ſtripes of the Former. If then, according to their interpretation, the *Jews* are meant by the ſuffering Perſon; who are meant by the Perſons, through whom, and for whom they ſuffered? Suppoſe the *Babylonians*, or any other nation, by whom they were oppreſſed. But is there any probability, that a *Jewiſh* Prophet ſpeaking of aliens and ſtrangers, ſhould rank himſelf with them, calling *their* tranſgreſſions *our* tranſgreſſions; and when his real meaning was. By *our* ſtripes *they* are healed, he ſhould expreſs it thus, By *his* ſtripes *we* are healed? This interpretation implies ſuch a violent abuſe of words and the moſt common forms of ſpeech; that no figurative, nor any other tolerable conſtruction will relieve it.

But to paſs over this difficulty, it will further appear, that the ſuffering Perſon here deſcribed could not mean the *Jews*; becauſe none of the characters ſuit them. It is in no ſenſe true, that they bore the griefs, or carried the ſorrows of others; that they were wounded

wounded for other Mens tranſgreſſions, SERM.
or bruiſed for iniquities not their own. VI.
The publick calamities they at that time were afflicted with, are by all their Prophets imputed to their own crying ſins, to a height of iniquity hardly to be expreſſed. Were they ſtricken for the tranſgreſſion of others? No. The Prophet tells us ſome other Perſon was ſtricken for their tranſgreſſions. For the tranſgreſſion of *my people* was he ſtricken, are the Prophet's words. The ſuffering Perſon here deſcribed is ſaid to have done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. And does this character ſuit the *Jews* under any captivity, or other great affliction, which the Prophet had in view? It is plain he had quite another opinion of them, when in his firſt Chapter he lamented them and their captivity in theſe words: *Ah ſinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a ſeed of evil doers, children that are corrupters, they have forſaken the Lord, they are gone away backward:* Therefore he tells them, *your country is deſolate, your cities are burnt with fire, your land ſtrangers devour it in your preſence, and it is deſolate as overthrown by ſtrangers.* The Prophet having given us ſuch

SERM. V. ſuch an account as this of their captivity and the cauſes of it, no one will eaſily be perſuaded, that in the Prophecy we have been ſpeaking of, he had reſpect to the ſame, or any other captivity: which had been in effect to tell them, what none of their other Prophets ever did, that whether innocent or guilty their country ſhould be made a prey to their enemies, and they become exceeding ſufferers. So little probability is there in this interpretation, that I think none more apparently falſe and abſurd could have been put upon it.

And as this Prophecy is in no tolerable ſenſe applicable to the *Jewiſh* People in general; ſo neither can it be applied to *Jeremiah*, or to any other Prophet before Chriſt, as ſome have endeavoured to apply it. It is true indeed that *Jeremiah* was a great ſufferer, and that his ſufferings were chiefly owing to the *Jews* and their ill treatment of him; *He was deſpiſed and rejected by them; a man of ſorrows and acquainted with griefs: they hid as it were their faces from him; he was deſpiſed, and they eſteemed him not: they did eſteem him ſtricken, ſmitten of God and afflicted.* Thus far the Prophecy ſuits *Jeremiah*, or any other Prophet

phet ſuffering unjuſtly through the ma- SERM.
lice of the *Jews*. But the moſt mate- VI.
rial parts of it are in no wiſe applicable to him; the characters far exceed what was ever pretended to be true of him, and in many inſtances are directly contrary to his real character. The Meſſenger or Servant of the Lord here ſpoken of is ſuppoſed *to bring good tidings*, to *publiſh peace and ſalvation*. *Jeremy*'s errand was the reverſe of this; he was to proclaim vengeance from the Lord, deſolation and deſtruction. The Servant of the Lord here ſpoken of, after his ſufferings, was to be *exalted and extolled and be very high*; it is ſaid *the pleaſure of the Lord ſhould proſper in his hands*; that *God would divide him a portion with the great, and he ſhould divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong*. But *Jeremy* was always oppoſed and depreſſed; he was utterly unſucceſsful in his prophetic Office; the travel of his Soul did not redound to his ſatisfaction; nor could *the pleaſure of the Lord* in any ſenſe be ſaid to have *proſper'd in his hands*.

But more than all this, was it ever imagined, or pretended to be true of *Jeremy*, that his Soul was made an offering for ſin, that he bore the guilt of others,

SERM. V.

others, or that by his ſtripes they were healed? Theſe are characters that beſpeak an uncommon Event, and muſt belong to ſomewhat more than a Prophet, more than a ſuffering Prophet; to one whoſe ſufferings ſhould be available to procure pardon of paſt ſins, and reconciliation with God; one ſo valuable in his ſight, that he ſhould juſtify many by bearing their iniquities. For you may obſerve, that the terms, wherein this matter is expreſſed, are ſuch as are uſed, when atonement or ſatisfaction is ſaid to be made for ſins by Sacrifice. It was an eſtabliſhed cuſtom with them, in making atonement, for the offender to lay his hand upon the head of the Sacrifice; from whence it was ſaid *to bear his iniquity*. In alluſion whereto the Perſon, here ſpoken of, is ſaid *to bear the ſin of many*, and that *God laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

And here it will be proper to take notice of ſome other Prophecies, which alſo have reſpect to this part of the *Meſſiah*'s character. The Prophet *Daniel*, pointing out the time when *Meſſiah* ſhould be cut off, takes notice that at the ſame time *reconciliation* ſhould be made *for iniquity*. The Prophet *Zechary*

Dan. ix. 24.

chary ſpeaking of that day, when there ſhould be a *fountain opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs*, gives us an account of the ſuffering of the *Meſſiah*, at the ſame time: *Awake, O ſword, againſt my ſhepherd, againſt the man that is my fellow, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, ſmite the ſhepherd, and the ſheep ſhall be ſcattered.* If to theſe paſſages we add that remarkable character of the *Meſſiah*, *Thou art a Prieſt for ever after the order of* Melchiſedec; they muſt terminate in ſome one extraordinary Perſon, whoſe buſineſs it ſhould be, to make atonement for the ſins of Men by the Sacrifice of himſelf. For, as the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* argues, This Prieſt of a new and different order from that of *Aaron*, could not be deſigned to offer the ſame gifts and ſacrifices, which were offered by the Prieſts under the Law; becauſe upon this ſuppoſition there had been no occaſion to change the Prieſthood: neither would ſuch a change have been conſiſtent with the Law, whereby the offering of thoſe ſacrifices, which were appointed under the Law, was expreſsly limited to *Aaron* and his ſons. Since therefore the Prieſthood was to be changed, it was reaſonable to think that the Method of atonement ſhould be

SERM. VI.

Zech. xiii. 1. Ver. 7.

Pſ. cx. 4.

Heb. vii.

SERM. VI.

be changed likewiſe: and the rather, becauſe it ſeems improbable that the blood of bulls and of goats ſhould take away ſins. Since therefore *a Prieſt of another more perfect order* was expreſsly promiſed, who ſhould offer a more acceptable Sacrifice; ſince another *fountain was to be opened for ſin, and for uncleanneſs*; and not the *Jews* only, but *many nations alſo were to be ſprinkled*, or purified; ſince we find a new Method was to be inſtituted of *making reconciliation for iniquity*; and accordingly we are told by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, that there was a Perſon to be expected, who ſhould *make his ſoul an offering for ſin, by whoſe ſtripes we ſhould be healed*; we have all the reaſon in the world to apply theſe paſſages (thus mutually conſpiring to explain and confirm each other) to the ſame Event: which cannot be pretended to have been accompliſhed in any one, but Chriſt our Lord, to whom they do exactly agree; and therefore we may juſtly conclude that he was the Perſon ſignified thereby.

But the *Jews*, to evade the force of this reaſoning, whereby we prove *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah* promiſed in the *Old Teſtament*; ſeeing that the words of theſe Prophecies cannot with any tolerable

rable colour be applied to the ſuffer- SERM.
ings of the *Iſraelites* in general, or to VI.
any of their Prophets in particular;
have, out of mere oppoſition to Chriſtianity, run into another notion of two *Meſſiahs*, one ſuffering, another triumphing. And the more effectually to exclude our Bleſſed Lord from being taken, upon this new ſcheme, for the ſuffering *Meſſiah*, they have arbitrarily determined, that the ſuffering one ſhould be of the tribe of *Ephraim*, the other of the tribe of *Judah*. It is a juſt Prejudice againſt this ſcheme, that it was never thought of before Chriſt appeared, but was firſt ſtarted by the oppoſers of Chriſtianity, without either tradition, or any Authority from the *Old Teſtament* to ſupport it. Their Scriptures no where encouraged them to expect any extraordinary Perſon of the tribe of *Ephraim*. And where-ever we find the *Meſſiah*'s office or character deſcribed, or any thing ſaid that may ſeem applicable thereto, we find no mention made, nor ſo much as a diſtant intimation given, as if two Perſons were to be employed therein. On the contrary it plainly appears, that that the ſame Perſon, who was to ſuffer, was alſo to ſucceed and triumph.

SERM. VI. Both parts of his character are often joined together, and ſo viſibly attributed to one, that they cannot poſſibly be divided between two Perſons. Thus in the Prophecy, which has been chiefly inſiſted on, as deſcribing very fully and particularly the *Meſſiah*'s ſuffering condition; even there we have the ſucceſsful part of his character diſplayed, and mentioned as the conſequence of his ſufferings and death. *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he ſhall divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong, becauſe he hath poured out his ſoul unto death.* And we find the ſame characters united, Ch. xlix. 7. *Thus ſaith the Lord the Redeemer, — to him whom man deſpiſeth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a ſervant of Rulers, Kings ſhall ſee and ariſe, Princes alſo ſhall worſhip.* We have alſo in the ſecond *Pſalm* this double character of the *Meſſiah* deſcribed; which muſt be underſtood of him, becauſe it cannot belong to *David* himſelf, or to any of his ſeed, but the promiſed Seed, in whom all the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed. For of him only could it be ſaid, That he ſhould *have the heathen for his inheritauce, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for his poſſeſſion.*

Ver. 1.

ſeſſion. With reſpect to him only could we we be told (ver. 12.) *Bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him.* In the two firſt verſes we find him ſpoken of, as in a deſpiſed and perſecuted condition, *The Kings of the earth and the Rulers taking counſel together againſt the Lord, and againſt his Anointed.* At the 4th verſe their malice is derided, *He that dwelleth in Heaven ſhall laugh them to ſcorn, the Lord ſhall have them in deriſion.* And at the 8th verſe he has a Promiſe made him of a glorious Kingdom, extending it ſelf to the uttermoſt parts of the earth. SERM. VI.

So little grounds had the *Jews* to ſupport their notion of a double *Meſſiah*, that we ſee it directly, and in the cleareſt manner contradicted by their own Scriptures; and what they would apply to two different Perſons, ſpoken of the ſelf-ſame Perſon in the very ſame paſſages. And thus the pains they have taken to miſapply thoſe Texts of Scripture, which we cite in favour of Chriſtianity to other purpoſes, ſerve only to juſtify our application of them more effectually; to convince us that they are incapable of any other application; and conſequently that our *Jeſus*, in whom alone they were fulfilled, muſt

SERM. VI.

be the *Meſſiah* promiſed in the *Old Teſtament*. For according to their laſt diſtinction they allow, that their Scriptures ſpeak of a *Meſſiah* who ſhould make his Soul an offering for Sin, and likewiſe of a *Meſſiah* who ſhould have the *Heathen* for his Inheritance: and it appears from the paſſages juſt now cited, that both theſe characters belong to one and the ſame Perſon; and it is true in fact, that theſe two characters were united in Chriſt; conſequently in both reſpects he anſwered the *Meſſiah*'s character; and his ſufferings, inſtead of being an objection, are a further confirmation that he was the *Meſſiah* promiſed in the *Old Teſtament*.

This was the Point at which the *Jews* were moſt offended, and therefore required to be handled in the cleareſt and moſt convincing manner. Accordingly we find the reaſoning on this head to be founded upon the plain and obvious meaning of the plaineſt and cleareſt paſſages of the *Old Teſtament*, taken in that one ſtrict ſenſe, *which is to be found out by a critical examination of the words.* And our Author, inſtead of endeavouring to prove the contrary, would fain prejudice the plain and natural conſtruction of

of theſe paſſages, by ſhewing how generally the notion of a temporal *Meſſiah* prevailed in our Saviour's time; from whence he concludes, that the Apoſtles *might ſeem to act an inconſiſtent part in interpreting the Scriptures in ſo many reſpects about* Jeſus *as they did, according to the traditional rules and explications of the* Jews, *and yet rejecting their traditional explication in reſpect to the temporal kingdom of the Meſſiah.* This charge of Inconſiſtency muſt be founded upon one of theſe two ſuppoſitions, Either that the *Jews* were *always right*, or that they were *always wrong* in their Interpretations. For if they were *ſometimes right* and *ſometimes wrong* (which is moſt reaſonable to be ſuppoſed of fallible Interpreters) then it was not only conſiſtent, but neceſſary, that inſpired, and conſequently infallible Interpreters, ſhould ſometimes agree with, and ſometimes differ from them. But we deny that the Apoſtles were ever governed by the traditional rules of the *Jews* in interpreting Scripture: becauſe they pretended a Divine Commiſſion to deſtroy the corrupt tradition of the *Jews*, and by virtue of that Commiſſion to teach them better. And we muſt turn

SERM. VI.

SERM. VI. the charge of Inconſiſtency upon our Author, who in one place allows * that 'tis part of a Prophet's office *to retrieve from corrupt gloſſes and traditions* a former Revelation; and yet blames the Apoſtles as inconſiſtent for attempting to do, what is confeſſedly a part of the character they took upon them.

But the paſſages we have now been ſpeaking of, are ſo plain, that they needed not the interpoſition of a Prophet, to ſet a ſincere honeſt mind right in the interpretation of them. They are direct and full to the purpoſe, in their *obvious and literal ſenſe* applicable to Chriſt, and in no tolerable ſenſe applicable to any other Perſon whatſoever.

From hence therefore we may obſerve, upon what unjuſtifiable grounds the prejudices of the *Jews* were founded: not upon Scripture, nor upon paſſages thereof taken in their natural and genuine ſenſe; but upon mere unſcriptural tradition, founded upon temporal views and the love of worldy greatneſs.

I have now conſider'd their two great prejudices againſt the Chriſtian Doctrine,

* Ib. p. 22.

Doctrine, the one concerning the Perpetuity of their Law, the other concerning the temporal Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*; both which are ſo far from having any foundation in Scripture, that if their Prophets had laboured to be clear and intelligible on theſe two heads, they could hardly have ſaid any thing more oppoſite to their vain conceits. And we find, not only the objections of the *Jews* fairly anſwered from their own Scriptures; but alſo the moſt material parts of the *Meſſiah*'s character eſtabliſhed, not by *typical*, but by ſtrict and clear reaſoning. As Author of a new Covenant, we find him juſtified in making new Revelations of the Divine Will to mankind, and alſo in aboliſhing and repealing ſeveral parts of the *Jewiſh* Law. As Mediator of a new Covenant, we find it was not only his buſineſs to appear in a low and ſuffering condition, but alſo to make his ſoul an offering for ſin by dying as a malefactor, that mankind *by his ſtripes might be healed.* We ſee further, that this ſalvation was not intended for the *Jews* only, but that *many nations likewiſe were to be ſprinkled* or purified; and that *all the ends of the earth were to ſee*, and partake of,

SERM. VI.

SERM. VI.

this ſalvation
offence which
ſuffering cond
as a circumſta
ry particular a
predictions co
whether theſe
any violence
poſes: I hav
attempted to
ſee they are
ſtruction, no
be found, to
plauſible colo
they were fu

We think
hard, to be
That *the Pr*
Teſtament *b*
do ſo plainly
primary ſen
thoſe which
that to prete
what they a
give up the
and other
think it hard
one who ha
cies under c
to ſhew us t
they do, in

ſalvation of our God. Even the
ence which the *Jews* took at his
fering condition, is clearly foretold,
a circumſtance atending it. So ve-
particular are the Scriptures in their
edictions concerning it! I have tryed
ether theſe Prophecies could with
y violence be wreſted to other Pur-
ſes: I have examined all the turns
empted to be given thereto: You
e they are capable of no other con-
uction, no other event in hiſtory can
found, to which they may with any
auſible colour be applied: In Chriſt
ey were fulfilled, and in him only.

We think it therefore not a little
ard, to be told with a confident air,
hat *the Prophecies cited from the* Old
eſtament *by the Authors of the* New,
o ſo plainly relate, in their obvious and
rimary ſenſe, to other matters than
hoſe which they are produced to prove;
hat to pretend they prove in that ſenſe,
vhat they are produced to prove, is to
ive up the cauſe of Chriſtianity to Jews
nd other enemies thereof. And we
hink it harder ſtill, to be thus told by
ne who has not taken theſe Prophe-
ies under conſideration, nor attempted
o ſhew us to whom, or to what event
hey do, in their primary ſenſe, belong.

But

SERMON VII.

CHRISTIANITY juſtified by the *Old Teſtament.*

ACTS III. 25.

And in thy Seed ſhall all the kindreds of the earth be bleſſed.

SERM. VII.

AS a great deal of diſhoneſt pains has been uſed, to ſtrip Chriſtianity of every other kind of Proof, beſides that of Prophecy; ſo the like has been uſed, to repreſent that Proof by Prophecy, as inconcluſive, weak, and ineffectual to ſupport, or give any weight to, the Chriſtian Doctrine.

Doctrine. For if, as we are told *, *the Proofs taken out of the* Old, *and urged in the* New Teſtament, *are either not to be found in the* Old, *or not urged in the* New *according to their literal and obvious ſenſe; but in a ſecondary, or typical, or myſtical ſenſe, that is, in a ſenſe different from the literal and obvious ſenſe*, what wiſe man would build any thing upon ſuch ſort of Proof? But we have reaſon to think that this ſuggeſtion is not a true one, and the rather becauſe the Author of it has declined the only proper way of proving it. For inſtead of taking under conſideration ſuch paſſages of the *Old Teſtament*, upon which Chriſt and his Apoſtles laid any ſtreſs, which they argued from, and urged as Proofs of their Miſſion and Doctrine; he has pitch'd upon five paſſages, which they *never* argued from, which they interpreted upon their own Authority, but were never inſiſted on as Proofs of the Authority claimed by them. So that ſuppoſing theſe paſſages to be applied in a ſecondary or typical ſenſe; yet as they were never inſiſted on as proofs, his ſuggeſtion concerning Proofs taken out of the *Old Teſtament* muſt be entirely SERM. VII.

* Ib. p. 39.

SERM. VII. tirely groundleſs. But then he tells you *, that all other Prophecies, cited by the Apoſtles, were thus applied; and the reaſon given is, *Becauſe 'tis poſſible in the conſideration of ſingle Prophecies to find out ſome other perſon or event, beſide Jeſus and the matters relating to him, to which they might be adapted without great violence to the text.* Suppoſe this were true! will it therefore follow that none of theſe Prophecies were primarily intended of Chriſt? or in their literal and obvious ſenſe applicable to the Chriſtian Cauſe? Is every thing typical, that may *poſſibly with ſome violence* be otherwiſe applied? or is that application, which is made *with ſome violence*, preferable to that which is natural, eaſy and obvious? or ſhall the violent application be reckoned the *literal* and *obvious* one, and the *natural* one be deemed *typical* and *obſcure?* If this be the way to find out the *natural* and *obvious* ſenſe of things, we muſt not judge of them by the rules of reaſon and common ſenſe, but by their contraries. We are ſenſible that moſt characters, be they never ſo exact, yet taken to pieces are capable of being applied, otherwiſe than they were

* Ib. p. 44.

were intended: but 'twill not therefore follow that the deſcription was unnatural, or obſcure, or that it would be difficult to find out the true intent thereof. It is therefore tying us down to very hard meaſure, 'tis impoſing upon us the moſt unreaſonable terms, to inſiſt that no Prophecy can in its *primary* and *obvious ſenſe* be applied to Chriſt or the Chriſtian Cauſe, which may *poſſibly with ſome violence* be applied *to ſome other perſon or event.* SERM. VII.

But however, to give this ſceptical diſpoſition its full ſcope; to ſhew that we are able to ſatisfy the moſt unreaſonable demands, and ſo juſtify Chriſtianity, even upon their own terms; we do engage to produce ſuch Prophecies which cannot *poſſibly, without great violence, be applied to any other perſon or event, beſides Jeſus and the matters relating to him*; in and through whom they were *ſtrictly* and *literally* fulfilled, That plain and clear Prophecy of *Jeremiah*, foretelling a *new Covenant*, which God would make, different from the *Law* or *Covenant* given by *Moſes*, is an indiſputable inſtance of this kind. None of the *Jewiſh* Prophets ſucceeding *Moſes* ever pretended

SERM. VII.

a Commiſſion to make a new Covenant with them: they all with one conſent inculcated and preſt the practice of the Law given by *Moſes*. Moſt of them indeed ſpoke of a new Covenant *to be made*; but till Chriſt came, that Covenant remained unexecuted and unrevealed. He appeared a Prophet like unto *Moſes*, like him in all the remarkable and diſtinguiſhing parts of his character; and to convince them, that God had put words into his mouth, and that the new Law he had to teach them, was of Divine appointment, he not only gave them the Proof preſcribed by *Moſes*, but even exceeded that Proof, which *Moſes* himſelf had given in confirmation of the firſt Covenant. This Prophecy is ſo plain that I think 'tis not capable of different conſtructions: neither is it poſſible to find out any other event, beſides the promulgation of the Chriſtian Doctrine, *to which it may be adapted without great violence to the text.*

And of this ſort are thoſe Prophecies which ſpeak of another Prieſt, not of *Aaron*'s, but of *Melchiſedec*'s order; of a new method of *making reconciliation for iniquity*; of a perfectly innocent

innocent Perſon, who ſhould *bear our iniquities, be numbered with tranſgreſſors, pour out his ſoul unto death*, and thereby *make it an offering for ſin*, that *we by his ſtripes might be healed*. Theſe Prophecies have been thought by our adverſaries ſo pertinent to the Chriſtian Cauſe, that they have been tortured and wreſted with all the art and violence imaginable; pains have been taken to apply them to *one* event and to *another*, without any ſucceſs; all their interpretations have been forced, unnatural, and in no tolerable coſtruction ſuited to the plain and obvious deſign of thoſe Prophecies. But theſe I have already conſidered. SERM VII.

I ſhall now proceed to the conſideration of a train of Prophecies, to be met with in almoſt all the prophetic writings of the *Old Teſtament*, all centring in one great important End, beſpeaking an Event of ſuch a peculiar and uncommon nature, that it cannot be pretended they had any mannerof completion under the *Jewiſh* diſpenſation; but were in a moſt ſurprizing manner fulfilled under the Goſpel. And had there been no other Prophecy relating to this Event, but that cited by our Apoſtle in the *Text*, ſo plain and clear

is

SERM. VII. is it, that it might juſtly have raiſed the expectation of all, that attentively conſidered it, after ſome new and more general Diſpenſation, than that given to the *Jews* by *Moſes*: For otherwiſe how could the Promiſe made to *Abraham* have been fulfiilled, *In thy ſeed ſhall all the kindreds of the earth be bleſſed?*

The *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation was undoubtedly partial, intended only for the uſe and direction of that ſingle people or family, the deſcendants of *Abraham*; as their Lawgiver *Moſes* in ſeveral places told them; *The Lord hath choſen thee to be a ſpecial people unto himſelf, above all people that dwell upon the face of the earth.* Holy *David* ſpeaking of the Peculiarity of that Diſpenſation, ſays, *He hath ſhewed his ways unto* Jacob, *his ſtatutes and ordinances unto* Iſrael. *He hath not dealt ſo with other people, neither have the heathen knowledge of his laws.* And we find many of their laws were given them upon this conſideration, that they were to be a peculiar people, and with deſign to keep them ſeparate from other nations; *I am the Lord your God which have ſeparated you from other people; ye ſhall therefore put difference between*

Deut vii. 6.

Pſ. cxlvii. 19, 20.

Lev. xx. 24.

tween clean beaſts and unclean. But as on the one hand it is not agreeable to reaſon, or to our natural apprehenſions of God, (who is not *a God of the* Jews *only, but alſo of the* Gentiles; *who hath made of one blood all nations, that dwell upon the face of the earth: who is good to all, and whoſe tender mercies are over all his works* I ſay, as it is not reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that ſuch a Being intended always to confine the Revelations of himſelf and his will to the *Jewiſh* people only; ſo on the other hand it is manifeſt from the *Old Teſtament*, that he had purpoſed likewiſe to open a door of ſalvation to the *Gentiles*; *to make his ways known upon earth, his ſaving health among all nations.* Even then, when he firſt declared to *Abraham* his intention of chuſing his family for his peculiar people he did alſo at the ſame time aſſure him, that his Bleſſing ſhould not always be confined to them; but thro' his ſeed be extended to all nations. His words are, *I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bleſs thee, and make thy name great, and thou ſhalt be a bleſſing. And I will bleſs them that bleſs thee, and curſe him that curſeth thee; and in thee ſhall all the natious* Gen. xii. 2, 3.

SERM. VII.

SERM. VI.

of the earth be bleſſed. And not only in this, but in ſeveral other places, we find this promiſe of a general bleſſing always joined with the ſpecial bleſſing promiſed to his family in particular.

Gen. xviii. 18. Thus, *Abraham ſhall ſurely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth ſhall be bleſſed in him.*

Ch. xxvi. 17, 18. Again, *In bleſſing I will bleſs thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy ſeed, as the ſtars of heaven — and in thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed.* We find the ſelf-ſame promiſe renewed

Ch. xxvi. 4. again to *Iſaac*, *I will make thy ſeed to multiply as the ſtars of heaven, and will give unto thy ſeed all theſe countries: and in thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed.* To *Jacob* alſo was the

Ch. xxviii. 14. promiſe repeated. *And thy ſeed ſhall be as the duſt of the earth — and in thee and in thy ſeed ſhall all the families of of the earth be bleſſed.*

This is a remarkable event, not tranſiently glanced at, nor obſcurely foretold; but frequently and clearly expreſſed, and almoſt as conſtantly repeated, as was the peculiar bleſſing promiſed to the natural ſeed of *Abraham*. And we might from theſe paſſages only without ſearching any further, appeal to our adverſaries, and demand of them, when

when or how this general Bleſſing ſo frequently promiſed to all nations, to all the families of the earth, was fulfilled? Take the Bleſſing promiſed in a worldly or ſpiritual ſenſe, as reſpecting the outward advantages of the body, or the internal improvement of the mind; either way the adverſaries of Chriſtianity will be at a loſs, to find out an event in any wiſe *adapted* to the Prophecy, *without doing great violence to the Text.* Nay, let them do what violence they will to the *Text*, let them but leave it ſome Meaning, and we defy them to find out any other Perſon or Event, beſide *Jeſus* and the matters relating to him, to which it may be adapted.

SERM. VII.

But that you may ſee, how unanſwerably they are preſs'd with this difficulty; how ſtrictly and effectually Chriſtianity is confirmed by Prophecies of this kind; I ſhall proceed to ſhew you, what a conſtant eye was kept to this great Event, throughout all the prophetic writings of the *Old Teſtament*; how it was explained and enlarged upon by their ſucceeding Prophets; and how well the explanation agrees with the event, being applied to the Chriſtian Doctrine and the in-

SERM. VII.

fluences of it. The only terms in the *text* that need explanation are theſe:

What is meant by the *Seed* in which all the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed. And,

What the *Bleſſing was*, which *thro' that Seed* was to be imparted to all nations.

By the ſeed of *Abraham*, of *Iſaac* or *Jacob*, may be meant the *Jewiſh* people in general deſcended from theſe Patriarchs; or elſe *ſome one* of their ſeed or family. And if there had been no other Prophecy to this purpoſe, but that delivered to theſe Patriarchs, this queſtion could have been determined only by the event. But as many other Prophecies were given afterwards to the ſame effect; theſe will ſatisfy us, that by *ſeed* was meant *ſome one* of their family, and not their deſcendants in general. For (*Gen.* xlix. 10.) we find the tribe of *Judah* pitched upon, out of all the other tribes, as that particular family out of which the promiſed ſeed ſhould ariſe. Where it is ſaid, *The ſcepter ſhall not depart from* Judah, *nor a Lawgiver from between his feet, till* Shiloh *come, and to him ſhall the gathering of the people be.* Here we find the promiſe limited not only

only to the tribe of *Judah*, but to one of his deſcendants at a great diſtance. The *Septuagint* tranſlation reads this paſſage thus, *The ſcepter ſhall not depart from* Judah *till the things laid up for him come, and he is the expectation of the* Gentiles. Take either conſtruction, that the expectation of the *Gentiles* ſhould depend upon one of his ſeed, or that to him ſhould the gathering of the people be, it is plain that the Bleſſing promiſed to all nations was to depend upon one of the tribe of *Judah*. SERM. VII.

And if we purſue our enquiry down to *David*'s time, we ſhall find a ſtricter limitation ſtill of that ſeed, in whom all nations were to be bleſſed. Who in his ſecond *Pſalm* ſpeaks of a particular Perſon, called in a peculiar ſenſe Son of God, to whom God had ſaid, *Ask of me, and I ſhall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the utmoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion.* That this Perſon was to be of the ſeed of *David* according to the fleſh appears from the lxxiid *Pſalm*, where ſpeaking of a Son of his, he ſays, *He ſhall have dominion from ſea to ſea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. All kings ſhall fall down before him, all nations ſhall do him* Ver. 8. Ver. 11.

SERM. VII.

ſervice. And, *All nations ſhall be bleſſed in him, and ſhall call him bleſſed.* That theſe things were not intended of his immediate Son *Solomon*, is ſufficiently evident from the deſcription, which in no wiſe fitted him. And will yet more plainly appear from the lxxxixth *Pſalm* that it was ſpoken of a Son or Deſcendant of his at a much greater diſtance. For at the 28th and 29th verſes, God, ſpeaking of his mercy or covenant to be eſtabliſhed in the ſeed of *David*, goes on to ſuggeſt in the following verſes that many of his immediate heirs and deſcendants would *forſake his law, and break his ſtatutes*; whoſe tranſgreſſions ſhould therefore be viſited with ſeverity: yet even after that, his Covenant with him ſhould be made good, and the promiſe in his ſeed be fulfilled.

And this Mercy or Covenant to be fulfilled in *David*'s ſeed we find directly applied by the Prophet *Iſaiah* to the calling of the Gentiles to a participation of the promiſed bleſſing. *I will* Iſa. lv. 3, 4, 5. *make an everlaſting Covenant with you, even the ſure mercies of* David. *Behold, I have given him for a witneſs of the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou ſhalt call a nation, that*

that thou knoweſt not, and nations that know not thee ſhall run unto thee. Here we ſee that everlaſting Covenant, the ſure Mercies promiſed in *David*'s ſeed, were to be fulfilled in one, that ſhould bear Teſtimony to the *Gentiles*, and through whom the *Gentiles* were to be converted unto God. And there are other places of this Prophet, which do yet more plainly fix upon one of *David*'s line, through whom the bleſſing promiſed to all nations ſhould be procured. *There ſhall come forth a rod out of the ſtemme of* Jeſſe, *and a branch ſhall grow out of his roots; and the ſpirit of the Lord ſhall reſt upon him.* Under the influence of whoſe government it is ſaid, *The earth ſhall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea.* Again, *In that day there ſhall be a root of* Jeſſe, *which ſhall ſtand for an enſign of the people, to it ſhall the* Gentiles *ſeek.* The ſeed then, in which it was promiſed that all the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed, could not mean the *Jewiſh* people in general, but one deſcended from *Abraham*, of the tribe of *Judah*, of the houſe and lineage of *David*.

SERM. VII.

Iſa. xi. 1, &c.

Ver. 9.

Ver. 10.

I ſhall proceed therefore by the ſame method to enquire, What the bleſſing

SERM. VII.

was, which thro' that ſeed was to be imparted to all nations. The Bleſſing principally inſiſted on in the writings of the Prophets is the Converſion of the *Gentile* world from that groſs idolatry, which they had been for many ages corrupted with, to the knowledge and worſhip of the one only true God. One inſtance hereof we have found already. (Iſa. xi. 9.) *The earth ſhall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the ſea.* With which agrees that Prophecy (Chap. ii. ver. 2, 3.) *It ſhall come to paſs in the laſt days, that the mountain of the Lord's houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the top of the mountains, and all nations ſhall flow unto it; and many people ſhall ſay, Come ye and let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, to the houſe of the God of* Jacob, *and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.* And this remarkable event is foretold likewiſe by the Prophet *Micah* (iv. 1, &c.) in the ſelf-ſame words. Accordingly we find this Converſion of the *Gentiles*, ſpoken of, *Iſa.* lix. 10. *So ſhall they fear the Lord from the weſt, and his glory from the riſing of the ſun.* And this was to come to paſs, as appears by the the following verſe, *When the Redeemer*

Redeemer ſhould come to Zion *and unto them that turn from iniquity in* Jacob. Again, God ſpeaks of the ſame Event, (Chap. lxv. 1.) *I am ſought of them that ask not for me, I am found of them that ſought me not; I ſaid, behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.* To the ſame effect are thoſe words of *Hoſeah*, (Chap. i. ver. 10.) *It ſhall come to paſs, that in the place, where it was ſaid nnto them, ye are not my people, there it ſhall be ſaid unto them, ye are the ſons of the living God.* And again, (Chap. ii. ver. 23.) *I will have mercy upon her, that had not obtained mercy, and I will ſay unto them, which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they ſhall ſay, Thou art my God.* The Prophet *Zechary* ſays, (Chap. xiv. 8.) *It ſhall be in that day, that living waters ſhall go out of* Jeruſalem, *half of them towards the former ſea, and half toward the hinder ſea — and the Lord ſhall be king over all the earth, and that day there ſhall be one Lord and his name one.* The Prophet *Malachi* ſpeaks yet more fully and expreſly to this point, *Mal.* i. 11. *From the riſing of the ſun even to the going*

SERM. VII.

SERM. VII.

going down of the ſame, my name ſhall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incenſe ſhall be offered to my name and a pure offering; for my name ſhall be great among the heathen, ſaith the Lord of hoſts. Holy *David* alſo ſpeaks of this event frequently, and in the plaineſt terms. *All the ends of the world ſhall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations ſhall worſhip before thee.* And, *All nations whom thou haſt made ſhall come and worſhip before thee, O Lord, and ſhall glorifie thy name.*

Pſal. xxii. 27.

Ib. lxxxvi. 9.

Agreeably to theſe paſſages, which ſpeak ſo plainly of the Converſion of the *Gentile* world to the Knowledge and Worſhip of the true God, we find the Perſon by whom this converſion was to be wrought, repreſented as inlightening them and giving them a new Law or Covenant. *Behold my ſervant whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my ſoul delighteth; I have put my ſpirit upon him, he ſhall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He ſhall not fail nor be diſcouraged till he hath ſet judgment in the earth, and the iſles ſhall wait for his law. I the Lord have called thee — and will keep thee and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light*

Iſa. xlii. 1, &c.

light of the Gentiles: To open the blind eyes, to bring out the priſoners from the priſon, and them that ſit in darkneſs out of the priſon houſe. And again, this Perſon is introduced ſpeaking in this manner, *Liſten O iſles unto me, and hearken ye people from far, the Lord hath called me from the womb — and now ſaith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his ſervant to bring* Jacob *again to him, tho'* Iſrael *be not gathered, yet ſhall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God ſhall be my ſtrength. And he ſaid it is a light thing, that thou ſhouldſt be my ſervant to raiſe up the tribes of* Jacob, *and to reſtore the preſerved of* Iſrael: *I will alſo give thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou mayſt be my ſalvation unto the end of the earth.* And the Prophet deſcribes his appearing as a light ariſing in a dark place. *Darkneſs ſhall cover the earth and groſs darkneſs the people: but the Lord ſhall ariſe upon thee, and his glory ſhall be ſeen upon thee. And the Gentiles ſhall come to thy light, and Kings to the brightneſs of thy riſing; the abundance of the ſea ſhall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles ſhall come unto thee.*

SERM. VII.

Iſa. xlix. 1. &c.

Ch. lx. 2.

Thus

SERM. VII. Thus you ſee, as the particular advantage of the *Iſraelites* was, whilſt they continued a peculiar people, that *God was known, and his name great among them*; that *God had ſhewed them his ways and gave them his ſtatutes*; *they were* reckoned *his* people, *and he their God:* So we are fully informed from theſe Prophetic Writings, that the *Gentiles* likewiſe were to be made partakers of theſe bleſſings. The *knowledge of the Lord* was to ſpread it ſelf over the earth, and *his name was to be great among the* Heathen; *a* new Law *was to go forth out of* Zion, to which the *Gentiles* were to be converted; they alſo were to be taken into Covenant, and accounted *the children of the living God.* They too *were to be ſprinkled* (or purified) by that Meſſenger of the Covenant who was to *make his Soul an offering for ſin*, who was to be unto them, not only *for a Light*, but alſo *for Salvation.*

Theſe then, as far as the writings of the Prophets will inform us, were the Bleſſings which through the promiſed Seed were to be imparted to all nations. To which (it appears) they had an equal title with the *Jews* themſelves. They were excluded no one privilege, which

which the *Jews* were intitled to, by the *Meſſiah*'s coming; but as many, and more than the *Jews* enjoyed under the legal diſpenſation, were plainly deſigned for them under the new diſpenſation promiſed to be revealed. SERM. VII.

And this conſideration will ſerve to convince us, how unſcriptural, how unjuſtly founded was the *Jewiſh* notion of a temporal *Meſſiah* or Deliverer. They expected a Prince to appear in worldly pomp and greatneſs, that ſhould lead them to victory and triumph, ſubdue their Enemies and bring the Nations in ſubjection to them. According to this notion his appearance would have been terrible to the Heathen world; the end of it being to overthrow Kingdoms and States, and ſubject them to the external polity of the *Jews*. Whereas on the contrary 'tis indiſputably clear, that he was to be, in an eſpecial manner, a *bleſſing* to them; for which reaſon he is called, *The deſire of all nations*. Inſtead of being made Slaves and Vaſſals to the *Jewiſh* yoke, they were to be partakers of all the Benefits of the *Meſſiah*'s coming; *they were to be God's people, and he was to be their God*. Inſtead of being ſubdued and conquered; they were to be Hag. ii. 7.

inlightened

SERM. VII.

inlightened and converted, and partake of *the ſalvation of our God.* Inſtead of being made ſubject to the *Jewiſh* polity and government; a new *law was to go forth out of* Zion, whereby God ſhould *teach them of his ways, that they might walk in his paths.* Inſtead of being compelled or forced into this new Covenant; they were voluntarily to offer themſelves, and their ſubmiſſion to it is conſtantly expreſt in terms, that ſignify the greateſt freedom and willingneſs: they are ſaid *to wait for it, to ſeek it, to gather themſelves together aud flow unto it.* There is not a word of force or compulſion which could hardly be conſiſtent with the character of him, that was *to bring forth judgment to the* Gentiles. *He ſhall not cry, nor lift up, nor cauſe his voice to be heard in the ſtreets. A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break, and the ſmoaking flax ſhall he not quench,* Iſa. xlii. 2,3.

If after all it ſhould be asked, what grounds we have to apply all the forecited Prophecies to the *Meſſiah?* I anſwer, that they all plainly relate to one great remarkable Event; that Event is conſtantly attributed to the miniſtration of ſome one extraordinary Perſon, who ſhould be of the ſeed of *Abraham,*

of

of the tribe of *Judah*, of the houſe and lineage of *David*. None of the Prophets, under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, ever had, or pretended to have, a commiſſion for that purpoſe. The Event, though often foretold, and the Perſon under whoſe influence it was to ſucceed, frequently promiſed; yet cannot our adverſaries fix upon any Perſon, beſides Chriſt our Lord, to whom theſe Prophecies may be attributed, and in whom they were accompliſhed. We judge therefore, that as the *Meſſiah* was to exceed, in the greatneſs of his Commiſſion and Dignity of his office, all the preceding Prophets; nothing more worthy the character of ſuch an extraordinary Meſſenger can be thought of, than that he ſhould be a Bleſſing to all Nations; that he ſhould recover a perverted World from the groſſeſt ignorance, ſuperſtition and idolatry, to the worſhip of the true God. It is a great and glorious Purpoſe, a Deſign worthy of a Good and Gracious God to propoſe and to countenance in the moſt effectual manner. And whatever the *Jews* might expect from their *Meſſiah*, this we are aſſured of, that no greater character could be given him, no Commiſſion of a higher and more important

SERM. VII.

SERM. VII. tant nature, than *to make the ways of God known upon earth, his ſaving health among all Nations.* And if this obſervation needs an Authority to ſupport it, we can appeal to their own Scriptures for one, where 'tis made *a light thing to raiſe up the tribes of* Jacob, *and to reſtore the preſerved of* Iſrael, in compariſon of being *a Light to the* Gentiles, *and for Salvation to the ends of the earth.* If therefore it be allowed, as it certainly muſt, that the *Meſſiah* was to exceed, in the dignity and excellence of his Character, all the preceding Prophets and Meſſengers of God; then the Prophecies before cited muſt indiſputably belong to him, as they beſpeak a character of the higheſt and moſt important nature.

Iſa. xlix. 6.

But ſuppoſe (for preventing a great deal of cavil and impertinence) we ſhould drop this word *Meſſiah*; (for we are not contending about names, but things) our purpoſe will be as effectually ſerved, and the foundation, which Chriſtianity has upon the *Old Teſtament*, as clearly demonſtrated without it. For call the Promiſed Seed by what name you will; that he was to be a Bleſſing to all nations; that the *Gentiles* were to be converted by him; that

that the Name of God was to become great among them through his means; that he was to eſtabliſh a *new Law* or *Covenant* with them, by virtue whereof they ſhould be accounted the People of God; is indiſputably clear from the Prophecies before cited. That none of the preceding Prophets pretended a commiſſion for this purpoſe; that this great and good deſign was never executed, nor in any ſenſe fulfilled before the coming of Chriſt, is as undoubtedly true, and cannot be diſputed. We appeal to hiſtory, and demand of our adverſaries, after their ſtricteſt ſearch, to tell us, when and how theſe Prophecies were fulfilled? *What perſon or event*, beſides Jeſus and the event of his Doctrine, *to which they may be adapted, without greateſt violence done to the Text?* I do not find they have ſo much as attempted to anſwer this queſtion. May we not therefore with all the juſtice in the world, and according to the ſtricteſt rules of reaſoning, inſiſt on theſe Prophecies, as direct and full to our purpoſe; when we are able to prove the exacteſt completion thereof through Chriſt and the influence of his Doctrine? SERM. VII.

SERM. VII. This was the work he came about, to eſtabliſh a *new Law or Covenant*, not with the *Jews* only, but with all Mankind. This *new Law* was indeed *to go forth out of* Zion, to the *Iſraelites* it was to be firſt offered; but not to them only. The Commiſſion given by Chriſt to his Apoſtles was, *to preach it among all nations*, only *they were to begin at* Jeruſalem. Afterwards they were to go unto the *Gentiles*, *to open their eyes, to turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.* And it is ſurprizing to conſider with what wonderful ſucceſs that great work, ſo frequently foretold under the *Old Teſtament*, was carried on under the influence of his name and doctrine. In leſs than forty years his Apoſtles, tho' few in number, furniſhed with that miraculous gift of tongues, with which he had qualified them for the execution of their Commiſſion, had gone over the wide bounds of the *Roman* empire, and in every country had made many converts; who not only embraced, but were ready to ſacrifice every worldly intereſt in the ſervice of, this new inſtitution. In all places idolatry, which under one ſhape or other had engroſſed the *Gentile* world, fell before

before it; their idols became viſibly neglected; their worſhippers ſenſibly diminiſhed; their temples were more and more forſaken continually; 'till in proceſs of time they were ſet apart for the worſhip of the one only true God. Nor did Chriſtianity ſtop its progreſs, 'till idolatry was utterly aboliſhed, and the knowledge and worſhip of the true God was generally eſtabliſht in all the known parts of the habitable world. Thereby ſtrangely and unexpectedly fulfilling the Prophecies of the *Old Teſtament*, which had ſo fully and clearly foretold, for ages before, this remarkable Event; which neither paſt experience could have ſuggeſted unto Men, nor human judgment have conceived poſſibly, unleſs it had been firſt revealed, and afterwards countenanced by God himſelf. SERM. VII.

And now let any impartial man be judge, whether a Perſon pretending himſelf to have *particularly conſidered all the Prophecies cited by the Apoſtles* in juſtification of Chriſtianity, could with any juſtice or truth affirm, that they *were fulfilled in a ſecondary, or typical, or myſtical ſenſe, and not in their literal and obvious ſenſe, which they ſeem to*

SERM. VII.

bear in the Old Teſtament †? Whereas in truth all points thoſe which were conteſted between them and the *Jews* (which were the only points, that could need any proof from the *Old Teſtament*) were confirmed and eſtabliſhed by clear Prophecies, not only taken in their *natural and obvious ſenſe*; but ſuch as would not bear any other conſtruction, than that in which they were applied by Chriſt or his Apoſtles. Were the *Jews* offended that Chriſt ſhould offer to eſtabliſh a *new Law* or *Covenant*, or that any part of the *Moſaick* Law ſhould be diſcontinued, which they imagined to be eternal? What could be plainer than that their own Scriptures both admitted, and had prepared them to expect, another Covenant, different from that given them by *Moſes?* Were they diſpleaſed, that this *new Law* or *Covenant* was offered to the *Heathen* and to the uncircumciſed? It was a Bleſſing promiſed them, long before their Law was in being, and afterwards frequently renewed under it. Were they offended, that the Perſon, pretending to be the promiſed Seed, ſhould make his appearance with ſo little majeſty and ſplendor? their own Scriptures

* Ibid. p. 44.

Scriptures had prepared them to expect him in a ſtate of humiliation and ſuffering. Even thoſe Scriptures, which ſpeak of his exaltation and glory, ſpeak of his low and ſuffering condition in the fulleſt manner? and at the ſame time declare the intent thereof, that he might *make his Soul an offering for ſin, that we by his ſtripes might be healed.* All this was plainly to precede his ſtate of exaltation; that therefore he was to riſe again from the dead, does by neceſſary conſequence follow from the ſame Scriptures. SERM. VII.

Theſe were the points at which the *Jews* ſtumbled. Theſe offences therefore being removed, the Goſpel became fairly reconcileable with the *Old Teſtament*, and by the Prophecies cited to determine theſe points, which were ſtrictly and truly applicable thereto, the Goſpel was not only vindicated from exception; but even juſtified by the *Old Teſtament.*

This was plainly St. *Paul*'s opinion in this caſe. As will appear by the defence he made for himſelf, againſt the accuſations of the *Jews*, before *Agrippa*, Acts xxvi. Firſt he gives the King an account of his education in the *Jewiſh* Religion, and his ſtrict At-

SERM. VII. tachment thereto, than of his converſion, the commiſſion he had received, and his conduct in purſuance of it. This he obſerves had expoſed him to the reſentments of the *Jews*. Therefore to bring the matter in controverſy between them to a ſhort iſſue, he ſpeaks particularly to thoſe points, at which the *Jews* were offended; inſiſting that therein he had ſaid *none other things than thoſe which the Prophets and* Moſes *did ſay ſhould come: That Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, and that he ſhould be the firſt that ſhould riſe from the dead, and ſhould ſhew light unto the people, and to the* Gentiles. No one will imagine, that the Apoſtle intended to be underſtood, that he taught no other articles but theſe. His deſign therefore muſt be to ſpeak to thoſe articles only, which gave the *Jews* offence. They would not be perſuaded, that the *Meſſiah* was to ſuffer, nor conſequently that he was to riſe from the dead, nor that he was to make a *new Covenant* with the people of the *Jews*, and with the *Gentiles*. In ſuch circumſtances, what better defence could the Apoſtle make; what more could be needful, to juſtify himſelf, and to confute his adverſaries; than to ſhew from thoſe very Scriptures,

Ver. 22, 23.

tures, which they pretended to be governed by, That the *Meſſiah* was to ſuffer; that notwithſtanding his ſufferings and death, the Prophecies relating to his triumphant State were accompliſhed in his Reſurrection and the conſequences of it; that he was to eſtabliſh a *new Covenant*, and that the *Gentiles* were to be partakers of it? This being done, he might juſtly reckon his defence complete. For their objections being all removed, a further defence of himſelf and doctrine from the *Old Teſtament* might truly be thought needleſs. SERM. VII.

This conſideration led me to proſecute this defence of Chriſtianity from the *Old Teſtament* in the ſame method; to inſiſt particularly on theſe Points, at which the *Jews* were offended; and to ſhew that they are founded upon expreſs and clear Prophecies, not capable of different conſtructions, nor of various interpretations to ſerve divers purpoſes; but in their ſtrict and natural ſenſe applicable to the purpoſes, to which they were adapted. And I think the greater ſtreſs ought to be laid on theſe, not only becauſe the objections of *Jews* are thereby fairly anſwered; but alſo becauſe the moſt material

SERM. VII.

parts of the *Meſſiah*'s Character, and ſuch as were leaſt liable to be counterfeited by an Impoſtor, are contained therein. Not barely to run the hazard of, but to beſpeak a ſtate of ſuffering and very great calamities to himſelf and followers; to engage to diſappoint his adverſaries by riſing again from the dead, and in deſpight of the powers of this world, the luſts and intereſts and prejudices of Men, to convert an idolatrous world to the worſhip of the true God, is certainly too diſintereſted and too fair a propoſal to made by an Impoſtor, and would be the readieſt way to prove him ſuch. No Man without a full perſuaſion of divine Countenace, could ever think to put his cauſe upon ſuch an iſſue, or hope to ſee it juſtified by ſuch events as theſe. Theſe Events therefore ought to have a double weight in Confirmation of Chriſtianity; as fulfilling the ſayings of the *Old Teſtament*; and as inſtances of Countenance, which cannot reaſonably be attributed to any other hand but God's.

The Prophecies relating to theſe Events are chiefly inſiſted on by the Apoſtles, and moſt frequently appealed to in their conteſts with the *Jews*.

There

There are other Prophecies ſtrictly and literally applicable to the *Meſſiah*; ſuch as ſpeak of the time of his appearance, the place of his birth, and other leſs material circumſtances of his life: and the completion thereof in Jeſus is taken notice of by the Evangeliſts in the courſe of their Hiſtory. But they laid no ſtreſs upon them, becauſe they related to circumſtances common to the *Meſſiah* with other Perſons. They alſo went a degree further, and take notice how ſeveral paſſages, primarily intended of other matters, were literally true of him; and alſo how the Events of paſt ages did in many inſtances correſpond to his particular circumſtances. But all this they did upon their own authority, as Prophets; and upon that authority we believe that God in ordering thoſe Events had reſpect to his Son and to matters relating to him. We are therefore under no concern to enquire, Whether the *Talmud* and other *Jewiſh* writers will not furniſh us with rules to juſtify theſe typical applications; and whether ſo juſtified they will not be arguments *ad hominem* to the *Jews*. For Chriſtianity is better founded than to need any recourſe to ſuch ſort of arguments: and that which

SERM. VII.

SERM. VII.

which is not a proof to the ſober unprejudiced reaſon of Mankind, we are willing ſhould ſtand as no proof at all

Chriſtianity, conſidered abſolutely without reſpect to a preceding Revelation, had every thing to recommend it, that any Revelation coming from God could be ſuppoſed to have. The deſign of it is the real reformation of Mankind and the encouragement of Virtue and Goodneſs in the world. A deſign worthy of God to countenance and promote! The firſt Publiſhers of it lay under no ſuſpicion of impoſture; they had no worldly ends to ſerve by it; they gave the ſevereſt proofs of their ſincerity and veracity; God alſo bearing them witneſs with ſigns and wonders and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt. And if any one has a mind to conſider it in the relation it bears to the *Jewiſh* Revelation which it ſucceeded; he will find there, beſides the expreſs promiſe of a *New Covenant*, of a Covenant in which *Gentiles* as well as *Jews* ſhould be included, many plain and clear Prophecies likewiſe, which ſpeak of an extraordinary Prophet to come into the world: who ſhould publiſh a *new Law*, ſhould be a Light to the *Gentiles*, ſhould reduce them

them to the worſhip of the true God, who ſhould bear our iniquities, make interceſſion to God for us, and by his ſufferings heal or ſave us. All which Prophecies are ſtrictly applicable to Chriſt the Author and Founder of our Religion, and to no other Perſon whatſoever. SERM VII.

Theſe are the true Grounds upon which Chriſtianity is built: from theſe we appeal to the Reaſon and Underſtandings, not to the paſſions and prejudices and follies of Men. Allowing and requiring them, when they can find a Religion better founded, more reaſonable in itſelf, more worthy of God for it's Author, and more conducive to the happineſs and perfection of human Nature, to make a prudent change of the one for the other. 'Till then, we think it both reaſonable and prudent to hold faſt the Profeſſion of our Chriſtian Faith, as the beſt means hitherto diſcovered to engage Men to live as Men, *ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.*

FINIS.

2 36

237

A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

Cathedral-Church

OF

NORWICH.

JUNE the 28th. 1724.

To which is added,

A POSTSCRIPT explaining a Paſſage in St. *Paul*'s EPISTLE to the *Galatians*.

By THOMAS BULLOCK, *M. A.*
and Chaplain to the RIGHT REVEREND the LORD BISHOP of *Norwich*.

Publiſhed by his LORDSHIP's *Order*.

238

ACTS III. 22, 23.

For Moſes *truly ſaid unto the fathers, A Prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him ſhall you hear in all things whatſoever he ſhall ſay unto you.*

And it ſhall come to paſs, that every ſoul which will not hear that Prophet, ſhall be deſtroyed from among the people.

THESE words are a citation out of *Deut.* xviii. 18, 19. and are applied by St. *Peter* to our Bleſſed Lord, as ſpoken with reſpect to him. The occaſion of the diſcourſe wherein this application is made, was this: *Peter* and *John*, going up into the temple, found there a Man lame from his birth, whom they immediately healed, by commanding him in the name

name of the Lord Jeſus to riſe up and walk. The People that frequented the temple (it being then the hour of prayer) were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened; which *Peter* perceiving, he took occaſion from thence to preach unto them the Lord Jeſus: Aſſuring them firſt of all, that the miracle wrought was not owing to their own power or holineſs; but that the name of Chriſt only (through faith) had done it, and given the Man that perfect ſoundneſs, of which they were all witneſſes: even the name of that Jeſus, whom they had not only delivered up and denied in the preſence of *Pilate*, but whoſe death they had deſired and procured. This very Jeſus (he goes on to tell them) had the God of their fathers glorified, and raiſed up from the dead, whereof he and the reſt of the Apoſtles were witneſſes; and of which the miracle, they had then wrought in his name, and through faith in him, was a further proof.

Thus far we have the direct proof urged by the Apoſtle, in juſtification of Chriſt and of his divine Commiſſion. The topicks were, The reſurrection of Chriſt, their own ſenſible knowledge of it,

and the farther confirmation thereof by the power they had of working Miracles in his Name.

But the Apoſtle, ſenſible that he was ſpeaking to *Jews*, who were grievouſly offended in Chriſt; and the more ſo, becauſe of his Sufferings, of which they had been the Authors; goes on to obviate that prejudice in theſe words: *And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did alſo your rulers. But thoſe things which God before had ſhewed by the mouth of all his Prophets, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, he hath ſo fulfilled.* Ver. 17, 18. As if he had ſaid, I do not ſay theſe things to irritate or reproach you with his death; I impute it rather to your ignorance, than your malice. But I mention it to ſatisfy you, that your prejudice againſt him, by reaſon of his Sufferings, is without juſt Ground. For what happened to him in this reſpect was directly ſpoken of by your own Prophets, as that which ſhould befal the *Meſſiah*; and what you did to him thro' ignorance tended to compleat in him the character of the Chriſt.

Having thus anſwered the principal objection, he exhorts them to repentance, and to believe the Goſpel. *Re-*

pent therefore and be converted, that your ſins may blotted out, that the times of refreſhing may come from the Lord, and that he may ſend Jeſus Chriſt, who before was preached unto you, whom the Heavens muſt receive, untill the times of reſtitution (or conſummation) *of all things* (that is, till all things be accompliſhed) *which God hath ſpoken by the mouth of all his Prophets, ſince the world began.* Then follow the words of the *Text* cited from *Moſes.*

But I would obſerve, that this citation does not relate to the verſe immediately preceding, but to the exhortation given at the 16th verſe, with which it has a natural and neceſſary connexion. And this will appear more clear by reading them together: *Repent therefore and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out. For* Moſes *truly ſaid unto the fathers, A Prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him ſhall ye hear in all things whatſoever he ſhall ſay unto you. And it ſhall come to paſs, that every ſoul, which will not hear that Prophet, ſhall be deſtroyed from among the People.* In this light, the words of *Moſes* are very proper to enforce the exhortation; and thus applied,

plied, the meaning thereof will be plainly this: Since God has raiſed up his Son Jeſus, and thereby juſtified him againſt all your prejudices; I adviſe you to repent of your folly and wickedneſs in putting him to death: And that the guilt thereof may not lie heavy upon you, be converted and become obedient to his Doctrine; remembring what *Moſes* himſelf has told you, for whom you pretend ſo great veneration, that God would raiſe you up a Prophet like unto him. And who more like to *Moſes*, than that Jeſus, whom we preach unto you? And if Jeſus be that Prophet like to *Moſes*, it is *Moſes*'s advice, that you ſhould *hear him in all things whatſoever he ſhall ſay unto you.* But if ye hear him not, *Moſes* himſelf has told you what the event will be, that *every ſoul which will not hear that Prophet ſhall be deſtroyed from among the People.* Thus I have given a brief account of the Prophecy, and the manner in which it was applied to Chriſt by St. *Peter.*

But this Subject will require a more diſtinct examination, Becauſe we are told, " That the citations of Prophe-
" cies from the *Old Teſtament*, ſaid to
" be fulfilled in the *New*, do not ob-

" viouſly, and literally, and agreeably to the *Context*, relate to the purpoſes for which they are cited by the authors of the *New Teſtament* *; but do ſo plainly relate, in their obvious and primary ſenſe, to other matters, than thoſe which they are produced to prove,——That the *Old* and *New Teſtament* have no manner of connexion in that reſpect, but are in an irreconcileable ſtate †." This is the charge in general, but the Prophecy now before us, will (I believe) be found a very good exception to this general charge, becauſe in its *obvious* and *literal* ſenſe it does more properly and *ſtrictly* relate to Chriſt than to any other: And in its full and complete ſenſe, could (I think) relate to none other than him. For it was obſerved by *Ezra*, who out-lived the lateſt of the *Jewiſh* Prophets, That *there aroſe not a Prophet in* Iſrael *like unto* Moſes, *whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the ſigns and the wonders, which the Lord ſent him to do.* But that Jeſus did come up to *Moſes* in this and every other reſpect will evidently appear, by comparing ſuch paſſages of the *Old* and

* Diſcourſe of the Grounds and Reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion, p. 120. † Ibid. p. 48.

and *New Teſtament* together, wherein the acts of both are recorded.

It is true, indeed, another conſtruction has been made of the words of this Prophecy. It has been alledged as a proof, that God intended to give the *Jews a continual ſucceſſion of Prophets* under the legal diſpenſation. Whether this Conſtruction be a juſt one or not; it muſt be allowed, that it is neither *obvious* nor *literal.* On the other hand, there needs neither *figure* nor *allegory* to make them applicable to Chriſt; but the more *ſtrict* and *literal* the Conſtruction we put on them, the more unavoidably will they refer to Chriſt, and next to impoſſible it will be to make them applicable to any one but him. But to ſpeak more diſtinctly on this head, I ſhall obſerve the following method.

I. I ſhall offer ſome Arguments to prove that this Prophecy does in its *natural* and *genuine* ſenſe, *directly* relate to Chriſt, and that it never was fully and *ſtrictly* compleated in any one but him.

II. Suppoſing it ought to be underſtood of a *ſeries or ſucceſſion of Pro-*

phets, that (even in that ſenſe) it would, without the Help of *Figure* or *Allegory*, be juſtly applicable to Chriſt, and will afford room for ſolid and ſubſtantial reaſoning in juſtification of him and his doctrine, from whence I ſhall take occaſion,

III. To remove ſome other objections and difficulties raiſed about the Proofs offered in favour of Chriſtianity. And,

I. I ſhall offer ſome Arguments to prove, That the Prophecy in diſpute does, in its *natural* and *genuine* ſenſe, *directly* relate to Chriſt, and that it never was fully and *ſtrictly* compleated in any one but him: The Prophecy is a very plain one, ſo plain, that one would hardly think it capable of different Conſtructions. A particular Prophet is ſpoken of. It is ſaid, that he ſhould be *of their brethren* (that is, an *Iſraelite.)* Theſe are general Characters, ſuch as are applicable to any of the Prophets under the Jewiſh Diſpenſation. But the Words that follow contain a very remarkable reſtriction, *Like unto me* (that was *Moſes.)* A very uſeleſs and a very improper Addition, if it

it were intended only of a *ſeries of Prophets*, who ſhould ſucceed *Moſes* in an ordinary way! For that ſettled order of Prophets were in no peculiar ſenſe like unto *Moſes.* They had no ſpecial commiſſion, they had no new law, no new inſtitutes of Religion to publiſh; they had uſually no credentials, no ſeals of a divine commiſſion. Their buſineſs in ſhort was, to explain, and inculcate the practice of the law already given by *Moſes.* Nor is it ſuppoſed, that they were infallibly directed even in this: For it is obſerved of many of their Prophets, that they erred in viſion, and ſtumbled in judgment. Wherein then was that *Likeneſs* ſo particularly taken Notice of in the Prophecy? Did it conſiſt in being of the ſame Profeſſion and Family with *Moſes?* In theſe indeed they were like him; but this could not be the ſimilitude intended; becauſe theſe are firſt particularly ſpecified, and the likeneſs to *Moſes* is an additional character, which we find explained in the following words: And *I will put my words in his mouth, and he ſhall ſpeak unto them all that I command him.* Which paſſage plainly ſuppoſes an extraordinary commiſſion, beſpeaks a Prophet immediately

ſent from God with ſome new Revelation, to publiſh, as from God immediately, ſomething not before revealed.

I add farther, That the Prophet here ſpoken of, was to give ſome extraordinary ſign or proof of his commiſſion, otherwiſe he was to be rejected; *Thou ſhalt not be afraid of him.* Now it is not ſo much as pretended, that the ſettled order of Prophets, whoſe buſineſs it was to explain and inculcate the *Law* already given, had conſtantly, or were uſually to have, any ſuch credentials of a divine commiſſion. It was not expected, that they ſhould give any ſign to confirm a doctrine before confirmed, when it was firſt delivered. But the Prophet, *here* ſpoken of, is ſuppoſed to have ſomething particular and extraordinary to reveal, ſomething that required a ſign to give it weight, and to confirm his Authority that revealed it. For the objection being ſtated, *How ſhall we know the word which the Lord hath not ſpoken?* It is anſwered, *When a Prophet ſpeaketh in the Name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to paſs; that is the thing which the Lord hath not ſpoken; but the Prophet hath ſpoken it preſumptuouſly; thou ſhalt not be afraid of him.*

Deut. xviii. 21.

Ibid. 22.

And

And though we allow, there were at different times extraordinary Prophets under the *Law*, who had extraordinary credentials of their Commiſſion; yet they were not compared to *Moſes*, or reckoned *like him.* The chief of their buſineſs was, to interpoſe in times of groſs corruption, when the *Law* had been remarkably neglected; to awaken Men, either by unuſual ſigns, or by ſevere threatnings and denunciations of vengeance to a ſenſe of their duty. Whereas the buſineſs of *Moſes* was, to deliver to them, as from God, immediately, a new ſyſtem of Religion, ſtatutes and ordinances and judgments, to be the rule of their conduct. And in this reſpect there was none like to *Moſes*, none that reſembled him in this principal part of his character, till Chriſt came to eſtabliſh a *New Covenant* with us, and to teach us the way of God more perfectly.

And it ſeems to me very plain from the *Context*, that there was a direct and particular view to the introduction of this new Diſpenſation. For the Prophet having told them, That God would *raiſe them up another, like unto him*, ver. 15. and calling to mind, how much they were terrified at hearing the

the voice of God, and ſeeing the great fire upon the mount, when the *Old Diſpenſation* was delivered; he tells them, that God had regard to what they then deſired, ſaying, *Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me ſee this great fire any more:* That therefore inſtead of introducing the *New Diſpenſation* in the ſame terrible manner, He would *raiſe ~~them~~ them up a Prophet, put words into his mouth, and he ſhould ſpeak unto them whatſoever God ſhould* think fit to *command*, and it ſhould not be uſhered in with a terrible voice as the *Law* was. Let any one judge, whether ſuch a caution could have been in any wiſe needful, if he had been ſpeaking only of the *Old Law*, and the manner, in which it ſhould afterwards be inculcated? It could never have entred into the thoughts of any man to ſuſpect, that God would continue to teach them the ſame thing over and over again in the ſame terrible manner. But, ſuppoſing the Prophet to be ſpeaking with reſpect to a *New Revelation*, the caution was plainly neceſſary: Becauſe they would naturally have apprehended, if this caution had not been given, that

that the *New One* would be introduced, as the *Old One* had been before it.

Thus, whether we conſider the words by themſelves, or with relation to the *Context*, they are ſtrictly and properly applicable to none, but a particular extraordinary Prophet, ſuch as Chriſt was, by whom a new diſpenſation was to be introduced. But however for argument's ſake, let us ſuppoſe that the words of this Prophecy were intended *indefinitely of a ſeries or ſucceſſion of Prophets*, it will notwithſtanding plainly appear,

II. That, even in this *indefinite ſenſe*, it is, without the help of *figure* or *allegory*, juſtly applicable to Chriſt, and will afford room for ſolid and ſubſtantial reaſoning in juſtification of *Him* and his Doctrine: To make this matter clear, I will alter the reading of the Prophecy, ſo as to expreſs that *indefinite ſenſe*, which ſome have put upon it. I will raiſe them up a *ſucceſſion of Prophets* from among their brethren, like unto thee, and I will put my words in *their* mouths, and *they* ſhall ſpeak unto them all that I ſhall command *them*: And it ſhall come to paſs, that whoſoever will not hearken to my words,

words, which *they* ſhall ſpeak in my name, I will require it of them.

Now I hope it will be granted, that taking the words in this latitude, they are at leaſt as applicable to Chriſt, as to any one of that *ſeries* or *ſucceſſion of Prophets*, ſuppoſed to be meant thereby. He gave as many, as great, as unconteſted outward ſigns of his being a Prophet, as any one that had paſſed before him under that character. He was alſo indiſputably one of their brethren: And if there was any tribe, out of which a greater Prophet than ordinary, was to ariſe, he was of that tribe alſo. He was *like* to *Moſes*, not only in birth and office, but alſo in all the remarkable parts of his character. As a lawgiver, he has viſibly, and in a manner obvious to common ſenſe, greatly improved and perfected the *law* given by *Moſes*; and alſo purged it from a great many corrupt gloſſes and interpretations put upon it by the Jewiſh People. In his behaviour and conduct, he plainly diſcovered as great ſteadineſs and integrity, as great meekneſs and patience, as much prudence and good temper, as *Moſes* did: Nor can we do his character juſtice, without ſaying, that he far exceeded him in

in all theſe, and every other God-like quality and diſpoſition.

And if any one ſhould aſk, as *Moſes* puts the caſe, *How ſhall we know* that he had a divine commiſſion, that God *put the words into his mouth*, and that he *taught* nothing but *what* God *commanded him?* We are willing he ſhould by tryed by *Moſes*'s rule. That *if the thing* (or ſign he gave) *followed not, neither came to paſs, that then the Lord hath not ſpoken by him.* This was the method the *Jews* took with him, when he acted and taught as a Prophet. *Maſter*, (they ſaid) *we would ſee a ſign from thee: What ſign ſheweth thou, that thou doſt theſe things?* And tho' he had been always working ſigns and wonders among them, in ſuch a manner as *was never ſeen in* Iſrael yet he indulged them and gave them a ſign, ſuch as man never gave, ſuch as no falſe Prophet could attempt to give, *Deſtroy this temple* (meaning his Body) *and in three days time I will raiſe it up again:* At another time more explicitly, calling it *the ſign of the Prophet* Jonas; that as Jonas *had been three days and three nights in the whale's belly, ſo ſhould the ſon of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

earth. As much as to ſay, you queſtion my authority, you ſuſpect me as a falſe Prophet, and, as ſuch, you go about to kill me: Let your purpoſe be effected, and ſee if God will not vindicate me from this falſe aſperſion. If I am a falſe Prophet, you are commanded by your *law* to put me to death; and you may well imagine, that if I die for ſpeaking falſely in the name of the Lord, he will not interpoſe to reſcue me, nor ſuffer me to be reſcued, from ſo juſt a puniſhment: And yet you ſhall ſee God interpoſing on my behalf in the moſt remarkable manner, and in three days time reſtoring me to life again, thereby diſannulling your unjuſt ſentence againſt me, and recommending me to the world, as a prophet the moſt highly favoured of him, for whom this inſtance of Almighty Power ſhall be firſt exerted.

Suppoſe then, that this Prophecy was not intended to point out any particular Prophet; but let us take it as a general direction; what Prophets they ſhould receive, and whom they ſhould reject. Was not Chriſt, in every reſpect, ſuch a Prophet as is here deſcribed? Is there any one character given

ven, which was not ſtrictly applicable to him? Was there any qualification wanting in Chriſt, which is here required? Or, was Chriſt chargeable with any thing, for which a Prophet ought to be rejected? If this therefore be a general direction to try their Prophets by; how are the *Jews* juſtified in rejecting him? Were they not hereby required, if a Perſon ſhould offer himſelf to them, under ſuch and ſuch characters, and with ſuch and ſuch qualifications, to hearken to him, and receive him, as a Prophet come from God? And did not Chriſt anſwer all thoſe characters? Had he not all thoſe qualifications? What good reaſon then had they to reject *him*, which did not equally oblige them to reject *all* that went before him? Why was *Iſaiah* to be received, and Chriſt refuſed? What did *Elijah* or *Eliſha* do, which Chriſt did not equal or even exceed? Which of all the preceding Prophets reſembled *Moſes* more than he? Which Prophet was better juſtified according to the rule preſcribed by *Moſes*, for diſtinguiſhing a true from a falſe Prophet, than he was? Did he not, as *Moſes* required, give them a ſign, a moſt aſtoniſhing ſign, ſuch, as no Prophet ever gave?

gave? And was not that ſign, unuſual and unlikely as it was to come to paſs, completely verified; Did not God alſo further juſtify him, according to this Prophecy, in puniſhing them, who would not hearken to him, as he ſaid he would do ſuch, as would not hearken to that Prophet, whom he ſhould ſend; Did not that Generation which condemned him, ſuffer in the moſt lamentable and unheard of manner? and do not their poſterity, who ſtill continue to reject him, ſtill lie under the ſame curſe? For from that time to this, they have not been ſuffered to be any more a People; but inſtead of being (according to their original inſtitution) a People ſeparated from the reſt of the world for the ſervice of God, they have been diſperſed over the face of the whole earth, and are reſerved as laſting monuments of the exact completion of the words of their own Prophet.

How juſtly therefore might Chriſt and his Apoſtles appeal to theſe words of *Moſes*? Take them in which ſenſe you will, they that reject him are condemned thereby. Take them in a *ſtrict* ſenſe, as reſpecting ſome particular Prophet,

Prophet, and they are applicable to none but Chriſt. Take them in a *latitude* of ſignification, as ſpoken *indefinitely, of a ſucceſſion of Prophets*, and this way Chriſt muſt be *included*, without *excluding* all the Prophets that went before him, and thereby making the Prophecy entirely inſignificant.

I hope then I have ſet this Prophecy, and the reaſoning from it in ſuch a light, as not to need the help of *figure* or *allegory* to make it applicable to Chriſt. You ſee we can reaſon from it *ſtrictly* and *according to ſcholaſtick Rules*; and the arguments drawn from thence have as much force, as the authority of *Moſes* can give them. But to ſet this matter beyond exception, I will proceed in the

IIId, And laſt place, To conſider ſome objections and difficulties raiſed againſt the Proof, which we have drawn from hence in favour of Chriſtianiy. It may perhaps be objected, That the Rule, here preſcribed by *Moſes* for the trial of Prophets, will admit of ſome exceptions: Becauſe it is ſuppoſed, that a falſe Prophet may give a ſign, and that ſign may come to paſs. The words are: *If there ariſe among you a* Deut. xiii.

Prophet—— *and giveth thee a ſign or a wonder, and the ſign or wonder come to paſs, whereof he ſpake unto them, ſaying, Let us go after other gods*;—— *Thou ſhalt not hearken to the words of that Prophet.* This (I think) is the only exception made by *Moſes* to the forementioned rule; and we readily admit it. But can any thing be gathered from thence to juſtify the *Jews* in rejecting Chriſt? Nothing. Chriſt was ſo far from being liable to this exception, that he was more than ordinarily juſtified from it. *He* was ſo far from attempting, *his Doctrine* was ſo far from having any tendency to pervert them from the worſhip and ſervice of the one onely true God; that his Doctrine brought over the *Heathen* world, who had from ages immemorial followed ſtrange Gods, to the worſhip of the God of *Iſrael.* In this moſt important Particular, he did vaſtly more than *Moſes* and all the preceding Prophets (for many ages) had done before him. *They* were hardly able, with all their endeavours, to preſerve that *one* People free from idolatry. *His* Doctrine brought over whole Nations and People, and Languages, from the

idolatry,

idolatry, which they had always been bred up in, and which had been handed down to them from their forefathers for many Generations. Nor was he hereby only juſtified from the exception made by *Moſes:* But ſtill much more ſo, in the completion of the moſt clear, frequent, and remarkable Prophecy, that is to be met with in all the *Old Teſtament.* He became hereby in the *ſtricteſt* ſenſe of the Prophet's words, *A Light to* Iſa. xlix. 6. *the* Gentiles. Through *him all the* Pſ. xxii. 11. *ends of the earth remembred themſelves, and turned unto the Lord. From the* Mal. xi. *riſing of the ſun unto the going down of the ſame, the Name of God became great among the* Gentiles. Upon this account, *All the Nations of the earth* Gen. xii. 3. might truly be ſaid, to be *bleſſed in him*; and in this reſpect the *Heathen* had the greateſt *reaſon* to praiſe him. Who can conſider this ſurprizing Prophecy delivered at *ſome* times when *Iſrael* was ſinking under idolatry, when there was the leaſt probability imaginable of its completion, and not be ſtruck with the more ſurprizing completion of it! Conſider the event, how every way worthy of God it

was; How unlikely, that any diabolical power ſhould be engaged in it! How, not only without, but againſt human means vigorouſly employed to diſcourage it, it ſucceeded under the influence of his Name and Doctrine; and it muſt be owned, he was the Perſon fore-ordained of God to ſerve this great and glorious Purpoſe.

If it ſhould be urged further, That (according to *Moſes*) Miracles are not a ſure ſign of a Divine Commiſſion, becauſe it is ſuppoſed, that a falſe Prophet may work Miracles, I anſwer to this, That no Doctrine, which contradicts our natural notions and apprehenſions of God, or repreſents as true, any thing that can clearly be proved to be falſe and abſurd, ought to be received, though Miracles ſhould be wrought to confirm it. But then I add, That when a Doctrine is liable to no exception of this kind, Miracles are (according to the *Old Teſtament*) a ſure ſign of a Divine Commiſſion. And if we have any juſt apprehenſions of God, it is moſt reaſonable to conceive, that God will never ſuffer greater Miracles to be wrought for our deluſion, than for confirmation

confirmation of the truth. Becauſe upon this ſuppoſition, miracles would be no proof at all: And if ſo, they would never have been given, they would never have been preſcribed by God, as teſts of a true Prophet, but 'tis manifeſt paſt contradiction, that they were ſo preſcribed and applied in the *Old Teſtament*; and that, according to all the rules there preſcribed for the tryal of Prophets, Chriſt was a true one; having given the ſame proofs, and even greater in their kind, of his being ſuch, than any other acknowledged Prophet, than even *Moſes* himſelf, who was the founder of their religion.

If it ſhould yet be urged, That though Chriſt did give the uſual proofs requiſite in a true Prophet, nevertheleſs, by pretending to be a particular extraordinary Prophet propheſied of in the *Old Teſtament*, which Propheſies were not compleated in him, he therein proved himſelf an impoſtor, and conſequently ought to be rejected. We are ready to own, that this objection is of great weight, if it were ſufficiently proved. But the proof requiſite to ſupport it, is en-

tirely wanting. It is not *attempted* to be proved, that there are Prophecies of the *Old Teſtament* relating to the *Meſſiah*, which were not fulfilled in our Saviour Chriſt: But on the contrary, it is inſinuated, that there was no ſuch Prophet directly ſpoken of therein. In anſwer whereto we inſiſt, that there are a great many *clear* Prophecies, which in their *literal* and *obvious* ſenſe muſt be underſtood of ſome extraordinary Prophet, which had no manner of completion, but in Chriſt. If it be not ſo; let them tell us when, and by whom, that *New Covenant*, ſpoken of by the Prophet *Jeremy*, was introduced. And if they pretend, that no *New Covenant* was intended; let them ſhew us what the Prophet means, by talking of a covenant quite different from the former, and ſaying, *That it ſhould not be according to the covenant, which God made with their fathers, when he brought them out of the land of* Egypt. Let them tell us, which of the ſeed of *Abraham* it was *in whom all the nations of the earth are bleſſed*, who beſides Chriſt has yet appeared *a light to the* Gentiles, and *for ſalvation to the*

Jer. xxxi. 31.

Gen. xii. 3.

the ends of the earth: When the other *Prieſt of* Melchizedeck's *order* aroſe, ſpoken of by the Prophet *David:* When that time is to expire, fixed by the Prophet *Daniel*, for *making reconciliation for iniquity, and bringing in everlaſting righteouſneſs:* When that *other fountain was opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs*, wherewith not the *Jews* only, but, *many nations* alſo ſhould *be ſprinkled*, or purified: Who beſides Chriſt has *made his ſoul an offering for ſin, by whoſe ſtripes, we may* hope to *be healed.* Let them (I ſay) ſhew us, when, and in whom theſe, and many more *clear, expreſs* Prophecies of like nature, were fulfilled. On theſe we build our notion of a *Meſſiah*, and theſe, we ſay, were *exactly* fulfilled in Chriſt, and in no other Perſon whatſoever.

Iſa. xlix. 6. Pſ. cx. 4. Dan. ix. 24. Zech. xiii. 1. Iſa. lii. 15. Ibid. liii. 5, 10.

But at preſent, let us ſuppoſe, what is ſo ſtrenuouſly contended for, that the paſſages of the *Old Teſtament*, cited and applied to Chriſt, do not ſo ſtrictly relate to him, but in their *literal* and *obvious* ſenſe they may be applicable to other matters: Yet ſtill it will appear, that the *Jews* were obliged to receive Chriſt, as a true Prophet,

and to acknowledge him to be, what he ſtyled himſelf, the *Meſſiah*. For it has been proved already, that they had ſufficient grounds, according to the rules given them by *Moſes* to try Prophets by, to receive him as a true Prophet. If ſo; let us conſider, what the buſineſs of a Prophet was: It was, either to explain, or to retrieve from miſtakes and corruptions, a former revelation; or elſe to diſcover ſomething not before revealed. If Chriſt then was a Prophet (that is) if he brought with him the uſual and neceſſary credentials of his being ſuch, as I have already proved he did; then he had, by his Prophetick office, authority to interpret and explain a former revelation. This being granted; I would aſk, Whether it be not conſiſtent with the power of interpreting, to diſcover a further view, had in ſome paſſages of Scripture, than what the letter of them obviouſly expreſs?

I own, it would render a Prophet ſuſpected, ſhould he, under pretence of interpreting a former revelation, endeavour to eſtabliſh any notion contradictory to the *clear*, *obvious*, *natural*

ral Conſtruction and Deſign of it. But nothing of this kind can be objected to Chriſt, or his Apoſtles. If at any time they apply a paſſage to Chriſt, which had perhaps a former completion; they do not preſs this application *in oppoſition* to the former; but *allowing the former*, they take notice of a *farther* completion thereof in Chriſt. To inſtance in one of this kind: St. *Matthew* applies thoſe words of *Hoſea*, *Out of* Egypt *have I called my ſon*, to Chriſt's return out of *Egypt*. But the Apoſtle does not ſay, that they are applicable only to Chriſt, or that they may not be underſtood of God's bringing the children of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*. All that can be gathered from the Evangeliſt's application of this paſſage to our Bleſſed Lord, is this: that God intended that remarkable event, befalling the children of *Iſrael*, his *nominal* or *adopted Son*, to anſwer to another event, which ſhould befall Chriſt his *real Son*. And is there any thing in ſuch an obſervation, inconſiſtent with the character of an inſpired interpreter; or, is there any thing ſo abſurd or improbable Hoſ. xi. 1.

bable in this application, as to render the Prophet, that makes it, (who has all the uſual and neceſſary proofs of a divine commiſſion) juſtly ſuſpected? It cannot be thought a thing improbable, that God (on whom futurity depends) ſhould, in ordering one event, have reſpect unto another: And this is all that is ſuggeſted by St. *Matthew*, in applying the forecited paſſage to Chriſt.

This I think a ſufficient vindication of the Apoſtles, in applying ſome paſſages of the *Old Teſtament* in a *typical* or *ſecondary* ſenſe to our Bleſſed Lord. But this conduct of theirs will appear much more juſtifiable, if we conſider, that the Perſons living under the *Old Diſpenſation*, had generally a notion, that their Scriptures had in many places a *further* view, than what was *literally* expreſſed; and did themſelves often put a ſenſe upon them, *beſides the direct and obvious one*. And I would aſk any impartial Perſon, Whether it was not properly the buſineſs of a Prophet *legally qualified* to interpoſe in ſuch a caſe, to do that *certainly*, by his prophetick office and authority, which they attempted

attempted, but with a great deal of *uncertainty*, without it? And then I would aſk, Whoſe interpretation in caſe of any difference, ought to be preferred, his or theirs? Let any one but conſider the circumſtances of *Moſes* and *Chriſt*, compare the Acts and Miracles, recorded of both; the excellent and ſhining qualities, that appeared in the Lives of the one and the other; he will find no reaſon to think, but that Chriſt was as truly inſpired in the *Interpretation* of the *Old Law*, as *Moſes* was in the *Delivery* of it.

But I am far from thinking, that Chriſt and his Apoſtles put their defence of Chriſtianity upon any typical application of paſſages out of the *Old Teſtament*; their Cauſe did not need it, nor do I look upon ſuch Citations as *Arguments* uſed to *ſupport* their Authority; but as *Interpretations* of the *Old Teſtament*, which have the Apoſtles Authority to *ſupport them.* We had perhaps never known, that thoſe words of *Hoſeah*, *Out of* Ægypt, *have I called my Son*, had any relation to the *Meſſiah*, if it had not been revealed to us by Chriſt

or

or his Apoſtles. And now it is revealed, we do not urge it as a *Proof*, that *Jeſus* was the *Meſſiah*; but having firſt found out the *Meſſiah*, we admit the *Application*, becauſe it was made by him, or by Perſons having commiſſion from him.

The Prophecies upon which we build our notion of a *Meſſiah*, and by which we prove that Chriſt was the Perſon intended thereby, are of a different nature, they are *direct* and *full* to the Purpoſe; in their *literal* and *obvious* ſenſe applicable to Chriſt, and in no *tolerable* ſenſe applicable to any other Perſon whatſoever. But beſides this, the reaſonableneſs and excellency of the Religion itſelf; its conſiſtency with the beſt and trueſt apprehenſions Men have of God; the unſpotted Innocence, the manifeſt Diſintereſtedneſs, the God-like Temper and Diſpoſition of its Author; together with the extraordinary Interpoſitions of Providence (without the concurrence of human means) to countenance and ſupport it, will always be to every ſerious impartial Mind, Arguments of ſufficient weight to embrace, and ſtedfaſtly to believe it. And

if

if the *Lives* of Chriſtians were but agreeable to the *Doctrines* of it, it would evidently appear, that there need be no more perfect Inſtitution of Religion, either for the Conduct and Well-government of human Life at preſent, or to qualify us for a State of conſummate Happineſs hereafter.

F I N I S.

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE the foregoing Sermon was preached, and ſome time after deſigned for the preſs, I began again to conſider with myſelf more ſtrictly, whether any probable objection could be made to that Account which I have given of ſuch Paſſages of the *Old Teſtament*, which are, or ſeem to be, in a *ſecondary or typical ſenſe* applied to Chriſt in the *New*. And upon a Review of *the Grounds and Reaſons*, &c. I perceive the Author of that diſcourſe triumphs much in the uſe St. *Paul* makes, *Gal.* iv. 21, *&c.* of the hiſtorical facts concerning *Abraham*'s two ſons, *Iſaac* and *Iſhmael*, (as you may perceive, *p.* 11. 93.) as if it appeared from thence that the Apoſtle did not only apply Paſſages of the *Old Teſtament* in a *ſecondary or typical ſenſe* to Chriſt; but did alſo urge them, as concluſive arguments in defence of Chriſtianity againſt the adverſaries of it.

I might

I might be very ſhort with our Author on this head, and tell him in few words, That the inſtance is not to his purpoſe. Becauſe the Apoſtle's diſcourſe, in the place referred to, is not directed to *Unbelievers*, but to *Believers*; not to the adverſaries of Chriſtianity, but to ſuch as admitted Jeſus to be the Chriſt, and his Doctrine to be of Divine Original. A queſtion had been ſtarted in the Church, *Whether* Gentile *Converts ought not to conform to the firſt Coveuant, before they could be intitled to the Privileges of the ſecond?* Whatever reaſoning therefore the Apoſtle uſes on this head is not to our Author's purpoſe; which was to ſhew, not what methods the Apoſtles uſed *to reconcile differences among Chriſtians*, but what methods were taken *to make Chriſtians*; what arguments they uſed to eſtabliſh Chriſtianity, *where it was not*, and not ſuch as were uſed to remove doubts and ſcruples, *where it was* admitted. Let the Apoſtle's reaſoning therefore in this place be what it will, it will not follow by any means, that this ſort of Proof was ever made uſe of to eſtabliſh Chriſtianity itſelf; much leſs, that *it was ſet up as the only proper reaſoning to bring Men to the Faith of Chriſt*, p. 94.

I might therefore juſtly diſmiſs the objection with this Anſwer. But yet I hope to make it appear, That the Apoſtle has put no *ſecret myſtical meaning* upon that *plain piece of Hiſtory*, referred to by him in his Epiſtle to the *Galatians*; that he argues from the *plain fact* itſelf, and not from any

hidden

hidden meaning ſuppoſed to be couched under it. The reaſoning, I own, is not very obvious; but a due conſideration of the hiſtorical facts, to which it refers, and of ſome parallel places, where the Apoſtle argues from the ſame topick, will (I believe) make it both clear and unexceptionable.

The piece of Hiſtory referred to by St. *Paul* in this and other places, is to be met with in the book of *Geneſis*. When God called *Abraham* to ſend him into a ſtrange land to ſojourn there, he made him this Promiſe: *I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bleſs thee, and make thy name great, and thou ſhalt be a bleſſing. And I will bleſs them that bleſs thee, and curſe him that curſeth thee: And in thee ſhall all the families of the earth be bleſſed*, Gen. xii. 2, 3. The Promiſe, you will eaſily obſerve, conſiſts of two parts; the former part relating to his own family, that his deſcendants ſhould become a great nation, and ſhould be bleſſed; the latter part reſpecting the families of the earth in general, that they ſhould be bleſſed in him (that is) in his ſeed, as it is explained, *Gen.* xxii. 18. *In thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed.* If we go on to enquire, upon what conſideration this gracious Promiſe was made and confirmed to *Abraham*; the Hiſtorian tells us, *Gen.* xv. 6. That *he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteouſneſs.* In proceſs of time *Iſhmael* was born to *Abraham* of *Agar* his bond-woman, *Gen.* xvi. 15. and *Abraham* ſeemed to deſire no more, but that

that the Promiſe of a numerous and mighty Iſſue might be fulfilled through *Iſhmael*, Gen. xvii. 18. O *that* Iſhmael *might live before thee!* But God aſſured him, That his Covenant or Promiſe, ſhould not depend upon *Iſhmael*, but ſhould be fulfilled in *Iſaac*, *My Covenant will I eſtabliſh with* Iſaac, *ver.* 21. *In* Iſaac *ſhall thy ſeed be called*, Gen. xxi. 12.

Theſe are the hiſtorical facts referred to. And from them we may obſerve, that the former part of the Promiſe, more immediately reſpecting the natural deſcendants of *Abraham*, did not ſo unalienably belong to his ſeed according to the fleſh, but ſome might be excluded from the promiſed Bleſſing, as appears in the caſe of *Iſhmael*. And therefore much leſs unalterable muſt their Claim be to the latter part of the Promiſe, which was made to all without diſtinction. *In thee ſhall all the families of the earth be bleſſed.* Upon this Obſervation, which is very obvious, is the Apoſtle's argument founded, *Rom.* ix. 6, *&c. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect*, becauſe many of the ſeed of *Abraham* are excluded. *For they are not all* Iſrael, *which are of* Iſrael: *Neither becauſe they are the ſeed of* Abraham, *are they all Children, but in* Iſaac *ſhall thy ſeed be called. That is, They which are Children of the fleſh, theſe are not the Children of God*, (they are not reckoned as Children in the ſight of God.) *But the Children of the Promiſe* (or Covenant) *are counted for the ſeed.* This he goes on to illuſtrate

from the caſe of *Iſhmael*, and likewiſe from that of *Eſau*.

We may obſerve further, That with regard to the latter part of the Promiſe, the *Iſraelites*, (as ſuch) had no peculiar title thereto. The Promiſe is general, no diſtinction is made of families, all are equally included, as St. *Paul* infers from the ſame topick, *Gal.* iii. 28. *There is neither* Jew *nor* Greek, *there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female*; *for ye are all one in Chriſt Jeſus*, the promiſed Seed.

As to the Condition or Qualification requiſite to make a Man actually partaker of the promiſed Bleſſing, we may obſerve, That Faith in God productive of ſincere Obedience, was very probably intended to be the means of obtaining the Promiſe; becauſe it was upon *Abraham*'s Faith that the Promiſe was made, and it is expreſsly recorded of him, that *he believed in God, who counted it to him for righteouſneſs*. After this manner we find St. *Paul* arguing from the hiſtorical fact, *Rom.* iv. 13. *For the Promiſe, that he ſhould be the heir of the* world, *was not to* Abraham, *or to his ſeed through the Law, but through the Righteouſneſs of Faith.* Judging it therefore very rational to ſuppoſe, that as *Abraham* obtained the Promiſe through Faith; ſo Mankind ſhould be made partakers of the Bleſſing promiſed, through the ſame means. For why elſe was it recorded? as the Apoſtle argues, *ver.* 23, 24. *It was not written for his ſake alone that it was imputed to him; but for us alſo, to whom*

whom it ſhall be imputed. As if he had ſaid, "It was recorded of *Abraham*'s Faith, that "it was imputed to him for Righteouſneſs, "that God was pleaſed with, and accepted "it, for our incouragement to imitate him "therein: That when the Promiſe made "to him through Faith ſhould be fulfilled, "we through Faith might become par-"takers of it, and thereby *Righteouſneſs* "*might be imputed to us.*"

As to the grand queſtion, Whether circumciſion, and the obſervance of the *Moſaick* Law (being both of Divine Appointment) were not intended to be neceſſary Conditions of obtaining the latter part of the Promiſe made to *Abraham?* The anſwer is, That nothing like this appears in Hiſtory, that therefore the *Jewiſh* Converts were to blame in inſiſting thereupon. Thus we find St. *Paul* arguing, *Rom.* iv. 9, 10. *We ſay that Faith was reckoned unto* Abraham *for righteouſneſs. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumciſion or in uncircumciſion? Not in circumciſion, but in uncircumciſion.* As *Abraham* therefore by Faith without circumciſion pleaſed God and obtained the Promiſe; it is not improbable, that they alſo ſhould obtain the Bleſſing promiſed; without circumciſion, *who walk in the ſteps of that Faith of our father* Abraham, *which he had yet being uncircumciſed*, ver. 12. And the very ſame Reaſoning will hold good with reſpect to the *Moſaick* Law, that the obſervance thereof could not be a neceſſary condition of obtaining the general Bleſſing pro-

miſed. Accordingly we find the Apoſtle applying it, *Gal.* iii. 17. *This I ſay, the Covenant that was confirmed before of God in Chriſt* (the promiſed Seed) *the Law, which was four hundred and thirty years after cannot diſannul, that it ſhould make the Promiſe of none effect.*

But might not that Law (you'll aſk) be made a neceſſary Condition without diſanulling the Promiſe? To which I anſwer, That the nature of the Law itſelf will determine this queſtion in the negative. Becauſe it was adapted to the particular circumſtances of the *Iſraelites*, conſidered as a ſeparate People: It was given with deſign to keep them ſeparate, during the corrupt idolatrous ſtate of the *Gentile* world. *It was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions* (with which the world abounded) *till the Seed ſhould come, to whom the Promiſe was made.* And till then *only*, is very evident; becauſe the continuance of a Law deſigned to keep them ſeparate, under a Diſpenſation intended to unite in one Body both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and to make both partakers of one common Bleſſing, is abſurd and ridiculous. The very ſuppoſition of ſuch a Law, exiſting in its full force and to be continued always, would neceſſarily exclude either *Jews* or *Gentiles* from their title to that common Bleſſing promiſed equally to both. For it would be abſurd to ſuppoſe one neceſſary condition of a *common Covenant* to be ſuch, as obliged them to have no *communication* with one another. Therefore, as the Apoſtle argues, *If they which are of the Law be heirs*, (as ſuch) not only *Faith is made void*,

Gal. iii. 19.

void, but alſo *the Promiſe is made of none effect:* Becauſe the Law which virtually forbids Union betwixt *Jews* and *Gentiles*, would exclude the *Gentiles* from inheriting the Bleſſing with them. And ſo *vice verſa*, if the *Gentiles* be heirs; the *Jews* continuing ſtill bound by their Laws of ſeparation, muſt in conſequence thereof be excluded from partaking of the Inheritance with the *Gentiles*. And herein we ſee the force of that reaſon, which St. *Paul* gives, why many of the *Jews*, who waited for the promiſed Seed, did not obtain the Bleſſing promiſed through him, *Becauſe they ſought it by the works of the Law*, which Law, perſiſted in after the promiſed Seed was come, ſerved rather to exclude them from it. Hereby likewiſe we underſtand, why ſubjection to the *Law* was reckoned a ſtate of *Bondage*, under which the *Jews* were ſaid to be *kept ſhut up*; not only as the *Law* conſiſted of many burdenſome and (in their own nature) needleſs ordinances; but alſo as it detained them (ſo long as it continued in force) from inheriting the promiſed Bleſſing. Rom. ix. 13. Gal. iv. 3, 9. Ib. iii. 23.

Hence it is, that St. *Paul*, in the diſputed paſſage, *Gal.* iv. 21, *&c.* compares the caſe of the *Jews*, perſiſting in the *Law*, to that of *Iſhmael*. *Iſhmael* could not be heir according to the *firſt part of the Promiſe*; becauſe, though he was of the ſeed of *Abraham*, he was ſo by a *bond-woman*; and *the ſon of the bond-woman was not to inherit with the ſon of the free-woman*: The *Iſraelites*, likewiſe conſidered as a People ſeparated by their

their *Law* from the reſt of the world, could not, as ſuch, be partakers of the *latter part of the Promiſe*, which was intended to unite all Men in one Body, and make them partakers of one common Bleſſing. As in the firſt caſe, there was a *natural imperfection*, by which *Iſhmael* was excluded: So in the latter, there was a *moral one*, by which the *Jews* excluded themſelves; for tying themſelves up ſtrictly to their Laws of ſeparation, they were diſqualified to partake of a Covenant, which in its own nature could admit of no ſeparation at all. Whilſt the *Law* therefore was their mother, their caſe might juſtly be compared to that of *Iſhmael*, the ſon of the bond-woman, who (as ſuch) had no title to inherit. This led the Apoſtle in the paſſage now before us to draw a parallel between the one caſe and the other. Far from ſaying, That by *Iſaac* and *Iſhmael*, in the book of *Moſes*, were meant the two Covenants; far from ſuggeſting, that any *ſecret ſpiritual meaning* was couched under that *plain piece of Hiſtory*, ; he argues (as is uſual) from one parallel caſe to another, and illuſtrates the caſe in diſpute, by its correſpondency to a known caſe, that was out of diſpute.

Accordingly the Apoſtle's meaning may be explained thus, *v.* 21. "I preſume that "you, who deſire to be under the *Law*, "are acquainted with it. *v.* 22. Conſider "then what is written concerning *Abra-* "*ham*'s two ſons, *Iſaac* and *Iſhmael*, one of "which he had by a bond-woman, the o-"ther by a free-woman, *v.* 23. The one

"excluded

" excluded from inheriting, as ſon of a
" bond-woman; the other, as ſon of a
" free-woman, inheriting by Covenant, or
" Promiſe, *v.* 24. This caſe is parallel to,
" and may (by a figure with which Men
" uſe to expreſs one thing by another) be
" made to repreſent the two Covenants:
" The one from mount *Sinai*, *viz.* The le-
" gal Covenant, thro' which the unbeliev-
" ing *Jews* are ſtill in a ſtate of bondage,
" by its laws of ſeparation *ſhut up*, and dur-
" ing their ſubjection thereto diſqualified
" to inherit the general Bleſſing. Their caſe
" therefore through the *Law* is like that of
" *Iſhmael* through *Agar*. The ſtate then of
" *Agar* and her ſon anſwereth to the preſent
" ſtate of *Jeruſalem* formed upon the legal
" Covenant, for thro' it ſhe is in bondage
" with her children. *v.* 26. But *Jeruſalem*
" which is from above, or the new ſtate
" formed upon the ſecond Covenant, is free,
" wherein there is no diſtinction of families,
" no laws of ſeparation; but as common pa-
" rent of us all, takes in all nations, all the
" families of the earth, as heirs of one com-
" mon Bleſſing. *v.* 27. Wherefore *Iſaiah*
" *ch.* liv. 1, *&c.* foretelling this glorious in-
" creaſe of the Church of God, breaks forth,
" and ſays, *Rejoyce thou barren that beareſt*
" *not; break forth and cry, thou that travail-*
" *eſt not: for the deſolate hath many more chil-*
" *dren than ſhe which hath an husband.* *v.* 28.
" We then, brethren, and all that embrace
" it through Faith, as *Iſaac* was, are heirs
" according to Promiſe, *v.* 29. But the

" un-

" unbelieving *Jews* reſemble the excluded
" ſon in all reſpects; for as then *Eſau*, that
" was born after the fleſh, perſecuted *Ja-*
" *cob*, that was born after the ſpirit: ſo *they*
" valuing themſelves upon being the ſeed of
" *Abraham* according to the fleſh, are for
" maintaining ſtrictly their laws of ſepara-
" tion, and would thereby exclude you, to
" whom the Promiſe equally belongs; but
" by that very means they are ſtill in a ſtate
" of bondage, and exclude themſelves. *v.* 30 So
" that what the ſcriptures ſays, with reſpect
" to *Iſhmael*, is juſtly applicable to them,
" *Caſt out the bond-woman and her ſon: for*
" *the ſon of the bond woman ſhall not be heir*
" *with the ſon of the free-woman.*"

This is the allegory, this is the application. There is no *myſtical meaning* ſought for, nor ſcrued out of the *plain words of Moſes*. The uſe which the Apoſtle makes of them in this and other places needs no other conſtruction, but the *literal* and *obvious* one. His deſign *here* is to illuſtrate one caſe by another parallel to it. And in this he is not ſingular, but is juſtified therein by the *common rules* of reaſoning and diſcourſe, and by the frequent practice of the moſt ſtrict philoſophical Writers.

The End.

Mr. BULLOCK's

SERMON

Preached at

HACKNEY,

With a PREFACE Shewing, That the GOSPEL is not an *arbitrary* or *unneceſſary* Inſtitution. In Anſwer to a Book intituled, *Chriſtianity as old as the Creation.*

By the ſame Author.

THE Reaſoning of Chriſt and his Apoſtles in their Defence of Chriſtianity conſidered, in Seven Sermons, preached at *Hackney* in *Middleſex*, in the Months of *November* and *December*, 1724. To which is prefixed, a Preface taking Notice of the falſe Repreſentations of Chriſtianity and of the Apoſtles Reaſoning in Defence of it, in a Book intituled, *The Grounds and Reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion.* Publiſhed at the Requeſt of the Gentlemen of *Hackney*.

2. THE Reaſoning of Chriſt and his Apoſtles vindicated: In Two Parts. I. Being a Defence of the Argument from Miracles, proving the Argument from Prophecy not neceſſary to a rational Defence of our Religion. II. Being a Defence of the Argument from Prophecy, proving the Chriſtian Scheme to have a rational Foundation upon the Prophecies of the *Old Teſtament*. In Anſwer to a Book intituled, *The Scheme of Literal Prophecy conſidered.*

Pray correct theſe Errors of the Preſs before you begin to read.

PRef. page 15. l. 12. for *him*, read *them*. *Ib.* l. 20. for *him*, r. *it*. p. 21. l. 20. for *Influence*, r. *Influence of it*. p. 32. l. 3. for *Hundred*, r. *Thouſand*. Serm. p. 7. l. 4. for *to* the *Jews*, r. *by* the *Jews*. p. 19. l. 25. for *to be diſpenſed*. r. *to diſpenſe*. p. 20. l. 25. dele *their* before *Fellow-Creatures*.

THE PREFACE.

To my very good Friends the Pariſhioners of HACKNEY.

GENTLEMEN,

I BEG leave to preſent you with a *Sermon* preached to you in the Year 1728, and printed by the ſame Copy from which you heard it, without Alteration or Addition of any one Sentence in it. You will readily imagine from the Diſtance of Time between *Preaching* and *Printing* it, that my Views now are ſomewhat different from what they were then; it will be proper therefore to give ſome Account of both.

My View in *Preaching* it was, To remind both myſelf and you of ſome of the Fundamental Laws of our Nature, moſt eſſentially neceſſary to our Happineſs and Perfection *here* and *hereafter*: Obſerving, from the Frame of our Nature and the very Conditions of our Being, that they always were, and cannot but be, the Will of God concerning us; That Reaſon itſelf was able to diſcover this without any poſitive Precept, or expreſs Command requiring them; That all the external Interpoſitions of Providence were occaſioned, by Mens Neglect of theſe immutable Laws of their Nature; and that the true Intent of all the Revelations made by God to Mankind, was, to remind them of theſe Duties, and to promote more effectually the Obſervance of them. From hence I thought you might readily perceive the Harmony there is between *Natural* and *Revealed Religion*, and their mutual Tendency to confirm and inforce each other.

But a late Writer * has obliged us to extend our Inquiries on this Head

a

* In a Book Intituled, *Chriſtianity as Old as the Creation*, &c.

a little farther, by queſtioning, *Whether Mankind could ſtand in Need of any Help from external Revelation*; and, *what Service it could do them?* I thought theſe Queſtions could hardly bear a Diſpute; and therefore, though the *Parable*, upon which my *Sermon* was founded, very plainly ſuggeſted both the *Need* and the *Uſe* of external Revelation, yet I inſiſted very briefly on thoſe Points, ſuppoſing them to be obvious to every Capacity.

THE *Parable* is this: *There was a certain Houſholder who planted a Vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a Wine-preſs in it, and built a Tower, and let it out to Husbandmen, and went into a far Country. And when the time of Fruit drew near, he ſent his Servants to the Husbandmen, that they might receive the Fruits of it. And the Husbandmen took his Servants, and beat one, and killed another, and ſtoned another. Again, he ſent other Servants more than the firſt; and they did unto them likewiſe. But laſt of all he ſent unto them his Son, ſaying, They will reverence my Son. But when the Husbandmen ſaw the Son, they ſaid among themſelves, This*

is the Heir, come, let us kill him, and let us ſeize on his Inheritance.

Now, ſhould any Man aſk, (upon the *Letter* of this *Parable*) *What Need had the Houſholder to ſend Servants to the Husbandmen*; or *what good he could propoſe by ſending them*; he would be reckoned very impertinent. But he will urge perhaps in juſtification of his Queſtion, That the *Houſholder covenanted* with his *Husbandmen*, when he put them in Poſſeſſion of his Vineyard(*a*); That the Covenants were abſolutely perfect, without Flaw or Defect, preſcribing every thing that was requiſite to the well-ordering and good Culture of the Vineyard(*b*); That theſe Covenants were ingraven † in a fair *indelible Character* upon a Monument erected for that purpoſe, to which every one might have recourſe, and expreſs'd ſo clearly that an attentive Mind could not fail to underſtand them (*c*): Therefore the *Husbandmen* could not need Meſſengers

* *The Law of Nature.*

† *Reaſon.*

(*a*) *Chriſtianity*, &c. Chap. I. (*b*) Ib. Ch. VI.
(*c*) Chap. II.

gers to *inform* them of their Duty; and to *impoſe new Terms* had been arbitrary and ungenerous, and unbecoming the *Houſholder*'s Character *(d)*. Now the Parable obviates all this impertinent Cavil, by telling us expreſsly, That they were *ſent to demand the Fruits of the Vineyard*, which the *Huſbandmen*, notwithſtanding their Obligation by original Agreement, were backward to pay.

NOT content with this, he urges farther, How could the *Husbandmen* refuſe it, when with due Attention they muſt perceive, that they were bound in Intereſt as well as Duty to perform Covenants, their Happineſs and Security, and every thing a wiſe Man can reckon valuable depending thereupon? (*e*) To this I need only ſay, That when a Man pretends to argue againſt Fact, he deſerves no Anſwer. But if we muſt ſatisfy an impertinent Curioſity, the Account is obvious. It is very probable that *Careleſneſs* and *Inattention* firſt betrayed them, by giving an Opportunity to their *Paſſions* to fix upon improper

(*d*) Ib. Chap. X. (*e*) Ib. Chap. III.

proper Objects, which carried their Thoughts ſtill farther off from their Duty, and tempted them by Degrees to neglect it, till at length many of them conceived a Diſlike to it. The longer they had proceeded in this indolent Courſe, they grew ſtill more fond of the immediate ſenſible Pleaſures the Vineyard afforded them, and conſequently more averſe to the Terms of their Covenant, which required a good deal of Seriouſneſs, Induſtry and Attention. From hence ſome of the moſt careleſs and diſſolute began to look upon the Improvements they were obliged to make, and the Returns that were due to the *Houſholder*, as unreaſonable Impoſitions: Others obſerving, that none were called to Account, no viſible Difference made between them that were careful to perform Covenants and them that were not, concluded every Man was left to himſelf, to act according to his own beſt liking. This pernicious Notion, which was found moſt apt to prevail, the *Houſholder* ſeveral times check'd by exemplary Puniſhments executed upon ſome of the moſt profligate. Theſe were found to have a good Effect upon

on many for ſome time, by convincing them, that they were not Lords, but *Husbandmen* in another's Vineyard, which made them more attentive to the Conditions upon which they held it.

BUT as theſe Impreſſions grew weaker by Time, (as every thing which ſtrikes with Terror is apt to do) ſo their Attention ſlackened. This made way for their uſual Gratifications to inſinuate themſelves, which by Indulgence gained ground in their Affections, till Attention to their Duty became irkſome and uneaſy. This put them upon inventing Ways of ſatisfying their Maſter, without rendring him the Fruits and making the Improvements, which by Covenant they were obliged to. But as this could hardly be done with any manner of Satisfaction to themſelves, whilſt the *Monument* preſented to them continually the *original Articles*; therefore ſome were for deſtroying it: But this was not only impoſſible to be done, but it appeared to moſt a raſh Deſign of very ill Tendency, and therefore was oppoſed and fruſtrated. Yet it became to many as

a thing aboliſhed, by induſtriouſly avoiding it. There was another Scheme, of defacing and razing out (if poſſible) ſome particular Articles, which they found diſagreeable to their corrupt Inclinations. Though this was generally approved; yet, as their Inclinations lay different ways, their Opinions were different, and they could not well agree about the Particulars: For every one could eaſily perceive the good Tendency of thoſe Covenants, which did not interfere with his own Affections, and them he was for preſerving; whilſt others differently affected were for defacing them. The Conſequence was, That few Articles eſcaped without ſome miſchievous Attempt from one Hand or other. Some *Articles* had more Favourers than others, who took Pains to prevent the defacing of them, or to render them more legible after they had been defaced: But ſome ſuffered greatly thro' a general Neglect, ſcarce any Attempts being made to reſtore them to their original Clearneſs and Perſpicuity. And though the whole was ingraven in *indelible Characters*, which could not utterly be erazed; yet many parts were ſo abuſed, that without

out a very quick Sight, great Attention, Care, and much Poring, they could not be made out to Satisfaction.

It will be aſked perhaps, Could they think this affected Ignorance would ſatisfy their Lord, or excuſe them to him, who had not conſented to, and could in no wiſe approve this Abuſe of his *Covenants?* The Plea, 'tis true, would by no means bear ſifting: But we know that ill-diſpoſed Minds will build a great deal upon very ſhallow Pretences, that ſeem to give Countenance to their corrupt Inclinations. And then to ſtrengthen the Excuſe, they propoſed to make him Amends ſome other Way. To this End ſome ſent him, inſtead of the Fruits, the very *Weeds* (*f*), which began to over-run his Vineyard through their Neglect of Culture. Others ſent him again the Things he had given them for their own Uſe (*g*), in which he could poſſibly have no Pleaſure. And others tore off the *young Shouts* of their Vines (*h*), which rightly cultivated would have produced a

(*f*) Numberleſs Superſtitions. (*g*) Sacrifices of Beaſts. (*h*) And of Children.

great deal of Fruit, and ſent them as an Offering to their Lord.

FROM *uſing* him *ill*, they began to to *think* as ill of him *(i)*: conceiving him to be *even ſuch an one as themſelves*, fanciful and variable, pleaſed and diſguſted with Trifles: Till at length they had repreſented him in ſo many Forms and Shapes *(k)*, that their Repreſentations of him ſerved, not only to excuſe, but to countenance and juſtify almoſt all their Extravagances. Political deſigning Men made a Property of him, by pretending to ſend and receive Meſſages from him *(l)*, calculated to ſerve their private Purpoſes. And very often to render them more effectual, they found themſelves obliged to ſpread frightful Notions of him, as a Being partial, obſtinate, fierce, and full of Reſentment; which made the very Apprehenſion of him terrible to weak Minds. This gave occaſion to others *(m)*, eaſily perceiving the Folly of ſuch Repreſentations, to run into the other Extreme; who imagined he was ſo intent upon his own private Pleaſures, that

(*i*) Polytheiſm. (*k*) Idolatry. (*l*) Oracles.
(*m*) *Epicureans.*

that he had no Concern about the Vineyard, or the Management of it; but had left them to themſelves to purſue (as they ſaid he did) their own private Gratification. This Notion was ſo taking, that it met with more hearty Friends than open Profeſſors; and it is eaſy to gueſs what Influence it had upon their Conduct.

Considering this great Variety of Opinions concerning the *Houſholder*, his Character, and Deſign in planting his Vineyard and placing them in it; Conſidering, amidſt the Rubbiſh of a great many prevailing Errors and Prejudices, how difficult it was to find out the ſingle Truth; Conſidering, that inſtead of uſing that Attention, which was requiſite to make the Diſcovery, they were generally grown liſtleſs and averſe to it; Conſidering, that many had imployed their Attention the quite contrary way, and had furniſhed their Fellow-Labourers with Opinions, calculated to confirm them in their diſſolute Behaviour, which for that Reaſon, they greedily catched at, and with readineſs embraced: I ſay, conſidering all this, who can queſtion,

but there was *Need* of ſome extraordinary Interpoſition on the Part of the *Houſholder*, to reclaim his *Husbandmen*, to correct their pernicious Opinions, to give another Turn to their perverſe Inclinations, to awaken and to keep up Attention, and to guard againſt the like Corruptions in Opinion and Practice for the future.

SOME may be apt to think, that in this Caſe the *Houſholder* had nothing elſe to do, but either to compel his *Husbandmen* to perform *Covenants* or to turn them out of his Vineyard: But the firſt of theſe he had reſolved againſt from the Beginning, purpoſing always to treat them as free Agents, to leave the Determination of their Conduct to themſelves, and to make their Duty to him a matter of their own free Choice: The latter he could not reſolve upon (ſuch was his Goodneſs and Compaſſion towards them) whilſt there was any probable Means of reclaiming them conſiſtent with their free Agency. Therefore after ſeveral Methods tried, ſuch as were beſt ſuited to their Circumſtances and Diſpoſitions at particular Times; ſometimes by exemplary Puniſhments

niſhments executed upon the worſt and moſt incorrigible; ſometimes by diſtinguiſhing with peculiar Marks of his Favour ſome few, that in a particular Part of his Vineyard were beſt diſpoſed to keep up the Memory of Him and his *Covenant*, till Opportunity ſerved of attempting a more general Reformation: He at length took the following Meaſures, which have all imaginable Marks of Wiſdom and Goodneſs in them, being viſibly contrived *to awake and to keep up Attention*, and to *influence* their *Affections*; all their Corruptions both in Principle and Practice having proceeded originally from *Inattention*, and the ill Turn their *Paſſions* took for want of prudent Thoughts to guide them.

To this End he determined to give the *Meſſenger*, intended to be employed on this Occaſion, ſome very *diſtinguiſhing*, *ſenſible* * *Marks* of his Authority and Commiſſion. This was plainly neceſſary to *awake*, and to *command Attention*, without which the beſt Reaſoning in the World will never cure Men of Prejudices, found to be favourable

* Miracles

vourable to their corrupt Inclinations. Some few of the *Husbandmen*, more ſerious and attentive than the reſt, had diſcovered great Weakneſs and Folly in many of the prevailing Notions, which tended to countenance their diſſolute Behaviour, and ingaged to make the ſame appear to others that would attend. But how to gain *Attention* was the Difficulty; when there were others who made the ſame *outward* Pretences to Wiſdom and Knowledge with themſelves, that undertook to defend thoſe prevailing Errors, and were therefore more readily attended to and more favourably heard, the Inclinations of their Hearers running before their Arguments towards Conviction. For this Reaſon, as there was *need* of a *Meſſenger* to be imployed immediately by the *Houſholder* himſelf; ſo there was *need* of ſome *outward*, *ſenſible Marks* to diſtinguiſh him, which would create a ſtrong *Preſumption*, at leaſt, that he was ſo imployed. Such *Preſumption* obviouſly obliged them to *attend*, till they had diſcovered ſomething in the Conduct of the *Meſſenger*, or the Affairs he came about, inconſiſtent with the *known* Character and Deſign of the *Houſholder*.

THIS

THIS Method therefore was very proper to *command Attention*, and to cut off all Excuſes for not attending, which was one of the firſt and principal Cauſes of all their Corruptions. For though no one could juſtly be received as a *Meſſenger* from the *Houſholder* (whatever *external Signs* he gave of a Commiſſion from him) if he propoſcd any thing, they knew and were well aſſured to be inconſiſtent with the *Houſholder*'s Character and Deſign concerning him: Yet thoſe *Signs* being of themſelves *apt to raiſe Attention*, and affording a ſtrong *Preſumption* in Favour of the Miſſion, they muſt be quite inexcuſable that would give no heed at all to the Meſſage, or that would not attend, till they had diſcovered ſomething unworthy of the Perſon ſuppoſed to ſend him.

AND this, as it obliged them to attend to the Embaſſy, ſo it obliged them likewiſe to conſider and examine more carefully, than ever they had done before, the Character of the *Houſholder*, and his Deſign in Planting the Vineyard and placing them in it; which had quickly a very good Effect upon many:

For

For their *Attention* being awakened by this Means, they applied themſelves more ſeriouſly to examine and diſcover the firſt Notices the *Houſholder* had given them of himſelf and his Deſign, which upon Trial they found more eaſily diſcoverable, than formerly they were willing to imagine. When upon comparing theſe Diſcoveries with the Purport of the Meſſage, they found an entire Harmony between them, they were the more thoroughly convinced of the Truth of both, and thereby more effectually wrought upon to correct their former Opinions and Practices by them.

It had alſo ſome good Effect among thoſe, who would not acknowledge the *Meſſenger*, nor pay any Regard to his Commiſſion. For, as his Interpoſition in a very ſurprizing unuſal Way had *raiſed a general Attention*, many groſs Errors and Prejudices (which before were greedily embraced without Examination, for the Countenance they gave to moſt of their Extravagances) were quickly expoſed, and their Abettors obliged to give them up as ridiculous and indefenſible. And it is obſervable,

ble, that theſe refractory *Husbandmen*, who would never acknowledge this Interpoſition to be from the *Houſholder*, have been ever ſince continually reforming and new-modelling their Schemes and Opinions, upon the Foot of that better Knowledge introduced by his *Meſſenger*; yet they would inſinuate, that they are not indebted to him for it, though they prove it †, even whilſt they diſpute it.

HERE then was one good End ſerved by this extraordinary Interpoſition, *That it raiſed Attention*; by which means a great many extravagant Opinions, miſrepreſenting the *Houſholder* and his Deſign concerning the *Huſbandmen* and his Vineyard, fell before it. And it cannot be denied but thoſe Points have been ſince generally better known and underſtood than they were

 before.

† Let any Man read the *Book* referred to, he will readily perceive the beſt Thoughts in it, relating to GOD, his Attributes and Perfections, and the Obligations of natural Religion ariſing from thence, are all borrowed from *Chriſtian Writers*, who were very ſenſible, that ſuch Sentiments were ſcarce to be found in the World before the *Preaching* of the *Goſpel*, but that Opinions and Practices directly oppoſite univerſally prevailed.

before. Yet ſome diſaffected *Husbandmen*, in deſpite of unqueſtionable Fact, have laboured to perſuade their Fellows (*n*), That the Repreſentation of theſe Matters by the *Houſholder*'s *Meſſenger* ſerve rather to miſlead and confound, than to inform their Judgments rightly about them.

BUT to return. The *Meſſenger* imployed on this Occaſion, being furniſhed with Credentials which naturally *raiſed Attention*, took that Opportunity to fix it, where it ought always to have been fixed, Upon the *Covenant* by which they were *originally* obliged. Aſſuring them, that he came not to alter or *deſtroy it*, but to exact a ſtricter Attention to, and a better Obſervance of it; that their Neglect of it was the very Occaſion of his Coming; and that their Maſter would not be ſatisfied upon any other Terms, nor admit of any other the moſt ſpecious Pretences they could make to his Favour. This was his conſtant Subject; his Diſcourſes are filled with Admonitions to this effect, ſometimes expreſs'd in general Terms of *repenting*, *doing his Father's Will*,

Matth. v. 17.

Ver. 20.

Ch. ix. 13. Acts iii. 26.

1 Joh iii. 8.

Matt. vii. 21, &c.

(*n*) Ib. Ch. XIII.

Will, &c. ſometimes applied to particular Caſes, where he found them groſsly ignorant, or greatly negligent; ſometimes inculcating certain comprehenſive Rules and Maxims, which might ſerve as a common Meaſure to their Conduct in particular Caſes, leaving the Application of them in thoſe Caſes to thoſe means of Knowledge, which the *Houſholder* had given them from the Beginning.

But knowing their *Attention* would not laſt long, unleſs their *Affections* likewiſe could be ingaged, He inſiſted much upon the earneſt Concern the *Houſholder* had for the good Management of his Vineyard; which was manifeſted by ſending him, his only Son, the next and deareſt Perſon to himſelf, on that Occaſion. And it is well known, that the Dignity of the Perſon imployed in an Affair ſhall give it Weight, and influence unthinking People, when barely the Importance of the Subject cannot: They are naturally apt to conclude, from the Dignity of the Perſon imployed, that the Buſineſs muſt be of great Importance, and that he, by

whom he was imployed, muſt have the Succeſs of it very much at Heart.

To ingage them ſtill more, he gave them a ſenſible Proof, that his Father's Demands were not rigorous, By voluntarily undertaking the Part of a Fellow-Labourer with them, confining himſelf ſtrictly to the Obſervance of all thoſe Rules by which they were oblig'd, chooſing always the hardeſt, and what they thought the moſt diſagreeable part himſelf, conſtantly declining thoſe fanciful Gratifications and Amuſements, which he ſaw had given a wrong Turn to their Inclinations, and made their Duty ſeem hard and unpleaſant.

He aſſured them farther, That his Father had another Vineyard, preſerved in the greateſt Beauty and Perfection, yielding uninterrupted Pleaſure and Delight to all that were imployed in it, through their conſtant, chearful, united Endeavours to cultivate and improve it by thoſe very Rules from which they had ſwerved; That even his Father's Conduct was formed upon the ſame Principles, by which he deſired theirs ſhould be governed; That by the

Rules

Rules he had preſcribed them he intended to fit them for himſelf, and to qualify them for that better Vineyard, into which he propoſed to receive them, not as *Servants*, but as *Friends* and *Children*, when he found in them a Diſpoſition and Conduct conformable to thoſe Rules, by which it was preſerved in the greateſt Perfection.

THE *Husbandmen* themſelves were ſenſible, that the Injoyment of the Vineyard then in their Poſſeſſion ſhould be of no long Continuance; they had alſo generally conceived an imperfect Apprehenſion, that they were to be removed to another Vineyard: But this was diſputed by many, miſrepreſented by moſt, and at beſt ſo imperfectly conceived and ſo doubtfully ſpoken of, that the Influence reached but a very little way, and the good it did was inconſiderable. But the Repreſentation and Aſſurance given of it by the SON, as it was apt to *raiſe Attention*, ſo it could not (if attended to) but *influence their Affections*, and entirely remove every hard Opinion conceived of the *Houſholder*, his Deſigns concerning them, and his Expectations from them.

HAVING

HAVING taken theſe Methods to convince them of the Folly, Perverſeneſs and Ingratitude of their paſt Conduct, they could not but ſee they had forfeited all *Claim* to the *Houſholder*'s Favour, and were in *Juſtice* liable to be turned out of the Vineyard, which contrary to *Covenant* and in deſpite of Goodneſs they had miſerably abuſed. He then proceeded to tell them, that his Father was ſtill placable, and well inclined to forgive what was paſt; but had conceived, that to do this freely (without ſhowing ſome Reſentment of their paſt ill Conduct, and without inſiſting upon ſome Method of Reconciliation, which ſhould ſignify his Abhorrence of it, and tend more effectually to diſcountenance it for the future) would not be conſiſtent with the Wiſdom of his Government, nor anſwer the View, upon which alone he was inclined to bear longer with them, *The Proſpect of their Amendment.* Upon which he added, That in Compaſſion to them, he had freely offered himſelf to be their *Mediator*, and to pay the Price of their *Ranſom* for them: Hoping that this would *influence their Affections*,

fections, give another Turn to their Diſpoſitions and Conduct, and that a grateful Senſe of his diſintereſted Love would ingage them to be more circumſpect for the future. And therefore, leſt this Motive to a chearful Obedience ſhould fail of its due Effect, as others had done before, through *Inattention* and *Forgetfulneſs*, He deſired, not for his own Sake, nor with an Intent to burden them, that they would keep up a *ſolemn Remembrance* of it in their public Aſſemblies, by complying with an *eaſy ſignificant Inſtitution* *, which he had appointed for that Purpoſe.

NEVERTHELESS, this affectionate, diſintereſted Interpoſition had not that good Effect *at firſt*, which might reaſonably be expected from it. The Generality, and they eſpecially who had always the greateſt Sway in the Vineyard, ſlighted and oppoſed it. So ſtrong was the Byaſs, which bad Habits and Affections had laid upon their Minds, that they hated the Thoughts of *Reformation*, and conſequently the *Means* intended

* The *Lord's Supper*, a poſitive Inſtitution of the *Goſpel*.

tended to promote it. To them therefore, who had discovered a better Disposition, and influenced by this gracious *Interposition* on the Part of the *Housholder*, had resolved upon a sincere Obedience to his Will for the future, the SON addressed himself in the following manner:

" YOU see the Perverseness of your " Fellow-Labourers, and may easily " guess what will be the Consequence; " That I shall soon be cast out of the " Vineyard by Violence, and they also " who declare their Adherence to me, " and endeavour to carry on the De- " sign, which I have begun, must ex- " pect to meet with the like injurious " Treatment. But be not discouraged " follow my Example, and continue " (notwithstanding all Discourage- " ments) to make *publick Profession of* " *your Adherence to me* *, and of your " Purpose to conform to the Design " of my Mission. I do not require " this for my own Sake; but because " I know it will be of Service, not on- " ly to you, as a *Remembrancer*, to " put

* *Public Profession of Faith in* CHRIST, another positive Institution.

" put you in Mind of all thoſe Mo-
" tives and Conſiderations, by which
" I have engaged you to reſolve upon
" a ſtrict Obſervance of Covenants for
" the future; but alſo becauſe in time
" it will have a good effect upon others.
" For ſome of the worſt Tempers have
" their Intervals of Seriouſneſs and At-
" tention: If therefore the Deſign of
" my Miſſion be ſpread abroad, and fre-
" quently preſented to their Thoughts
" by an *open Profeſſion* of it, it may lay
" hold of them in their ſerious Hours
" and at length prevail. But if you
" ſhould once be wrought upon thro'
" Fear to conceal and ſuppreſs it, as
" you cannot expect it ſhould ſpread
" its Influence among others; ſo the
" Remembrance of it will wear away
" by Degrees among yourſelves, and
" the good Effects of it leſſen in Pro-
" portion.

" To encourage and ſupport your-
" ſelves therefore againſt Fear on this
" Account, Conſider, that at the worſt
" they can but caſt you out of the
" Vineyard, and then my Father will
" take you into his better Vineyard

" (for which you had ſincerely endea-
" voured to qualify yourſelves) where
" no ſuch reſtleſs Tempers, uneaſy to
" themſelves and troubleſome to o-
" thers, *ſhall ever enter*. And that
" you may not be diffident, or deſpair
" of Strength to ſupport yourſelves, I
" aſſure you, that you ſhall want no
" Countenance, or Aſſiſtance that is
" needful in any Caſe whatſoever. I
" know, and have experienced your
" Needs and Infirmities; and my Fa-
" ther hath given me all Power on your
" Behalf, to do for you in all Caſes what
" I ſhall ſee moſt expedient. Only I
" adviſe, That in all ſuch Caſes you
" lay your Wants before my Father,
" humbly deſiring, *in my Name*, and
" *for my Sake* *, that he will admini-
" ſter ſuitable Relief. *This*, as it will
" ſerve to *remind* you of your Depen-
" dance upon him, and the Obedience
" due to him upon that Account;
" ſo *to do it in my Name* will re-
" mind you of your paſt Miſcarri-
" ages, whereby you ſtood in need of
" a *Mediator*, which will naturally
" oblige

* *To pray to* GOD *through the Mediation of* CHRIST, a poſitive Inſtitution of the *Goſpel*.

" oblige you to be more circumſpect
" for the future: It will alſo call to
" mind the many encouraging Con-
" ſiderations, which have offered
" themſelves through my Mediation,
" the good Effect whereof you have
" felt already, and therefore it muſt
" be of Service to be frequently re-
" minded of them.

" As to thoſe, who ſhall hereafter
" be prevailed upon by the ſame means,
" to acknowledge the Folly of their
" paſt Miſconduct, and reſolved upon
" a ſtrict Adherence to their Duty for
" the future, ſhall deſire to be admit-
" ted into Fellowſhip with you; I ad-
" viſe, That you inſiſt upon a public
" ſolemn Engagement from them to
" that Effect; and then that you re-
" ceive them by an *external Waſhing*
" *of their Bodies* *, to ſignify both to
" them and to you, that the State en-
" tered upon by that *Rite* obliges you
" to a continual *Purgation*, or *Clean-*
" *ſing* from all Stain of Diſobedience;
" to which End I promiſe, that all

 " needful

* *Baptiſm* a poſitive Inſtitution of the Goſpel.

" needful Assistance shall be admini-
" stred to you.

" You may plainly see to what all
" this tends. Had you been mindful
" of the *Covenant*, which my Father
" made with you, upon your first En-
" trance into his Vineyard, and *at-*
" *tended* to it as you ought; there had
" been *no need* of my *Mediation*, nor of
" any extraordinary Methods to ingage
" your Obedience to it. For as that
" *Covenant* was *absolutely perfect*, pre-
" scribing every Thing requisite to the
" good Management of the Vineyard:
" So you had *sufficient Means* of know-
" ing how it ought to have been ma-
" naged, and of perceiving that your
" own Good was consulted in every
" *Article*. But you quicly grew care-
" less, suffered Trifles, in comparison,
" to run away with your *Affections*,
" which carried off your *Attention*
" with them. Then the *Covenant* be-
" gan to be neglected; that Neglect
" was attended with many Transgres-
" sions; your Transgressions made you
" hate the Thoughts of it, and willing
" to catch at any fond Opinion that

" countenanced

" countenanced your Extravagances:
" Till by groſs Corruptions both in
" Principle and Practice, you had
" brought Things into ſuch Diſorder
" that you could not but feel the In-
" conveniences of it; yet through bad
" Habits and Prejudices, you had ge-
" nerally conceived ſuch an Averſion to
" all Thoughts of Reformation, that
" no *ordinary Means* were likely to ef-
" fect it in any tolerable Degree.

" THIS is the Buſineſs upon which
" I am ſent; Not to alter or diminiſh
" a *Tittle* of the *Covenant*, by which
" you were *originally* obliged: No;
" your own good, and the good of the
" Vineyard will not ſuffer it; I ſhould
" in Truth be your Enemy if I propo-
" ſed it. The *Amendment* required re-
" lates to yourſelves, and not to the *Co-*
" *venant*. *That* was *faultleſs* and with-
" out Defect; *You* only have been de-
" ficient in the Obſervance of it. I
" am therefore ſent, to convince you
" of my Father's *immutable* Purpoſe to
" exact Obedience to it, to *awaken* your
" *Attention*, and to ingage you by *Af-*
" *fection*, as well as *Duty*, to adhere
" ſtedfaſtly

" ſtedfaſtly to it. Uſe but *Attention*,
" and you cannot but ſee it was intend-
" ed for your *preſent* Good; and I
" have ſhewed you more plainly, than
" ever you knew before, how much
" your *future* Intereſt depends upon it.
" Then, if you conſider the very ea
" neſt, merciful Methods that
" been uſed, you may eaſily
" is for your Sakes, that my Fat
" has been thus urgent and ſollicito
" in this Affair. The *Inſtitutions* I
" have given you, have a View *only* to
" this End, and I would have you look
" upon them as ſuch; not as *Penances*
" impoſed upon you for your *paſt* Neg-
" lect; nor as *Indulgences* to be plead-
" ed in Excuſe for any *future* Neglect;
" nor as *Subſtitutes* in the Room of any
" Duties *originally* required; nor as
" *Additions*, ſtrictly ſpeaking: But as
" *Monitors*, to put you in mind of your
" paſt Failings, that you may be the
" more circumſpect for the future; as
" *Remembrancers*, to awaken and keep
" up *Attention* to your Duty, and to
" bring to mind ſuch Motives and Con-
" ſiderations, as are very proper to *influ-*
" *ence* your *Affections* in Favour of it.

" Want

" Want of *Attention* betrayed you *at*
" *firſt*; this gave a looſe to your *Af-*
" *fections*, which blindly fixed them-
" ſelves upon improper Objects; from
" whence proceeded all your Corrup-
" tions in *Opinion* and *Practice*. As
" therefore I have *awakened your At-*
" *tention*, I have given you theſe *Or-*
" *dinances* to *keep it awake*. In your
" preſent State you will find frequent
" *need* of ſuch *Helps*; but if you uſe
" them ſincerely *as ſuch*, you ſhall find
" them a *Means* of greater."

I HAVE now carried the *Parable* as far as I intended, or the preſent Occaſion requires. And I think the State of Mankind with reſpect to GOD, anſwers ſo plainly to this ſtate of the Caſe between the *Houſholder* and his *Huſbandmen*, that I need not make the Application, but leave the *Parable*, as the Author of it did, to explain itſelf.

FROM this Repreſentation then of the State of Mankind, when the *Goſpel* appeared (which I think is not diſputed by the *Writer* above-mentioned) let any Man judge, Whether it did not

not *need* ſome *extraordinary Remedy*. But *This* (he tells us (*o*) *is ſuppoſing* God *had left Mankind Four hundred Years together deſtitute of ſufficient Means to do their Duty, and to preſerve them from ſinking into a corrupted degenerate State. Judge, I pray, between* God *and his Vineyard.* Had *He* left them without *ſufficient Means?* Or did *they* neglect and abuſe them? If a Traveller throws Duſt in the Eyes of his Guide, and by that means loſes his Way, will you conclude, as this Author does (*p*) That *the Fault was not* in the Traveller, *but in the Guide*, or in him that gave him that Guide? Or, if a Man through Neglect and Abuſe of *Means* becomes *in Fact* ignorant of his Duty, is he therefore unaccountable (*q*)? Many ſuch Inferences are made by this Author, which are not only ſenſeleſs, but deteſtable.

The ſame Way of arguing runs through his whole *Performance*, about the *extraordinary Diſcoveries* that were made, and *Means* that were inſtituted by

(*o*) Page 375. (*p*) p. 376. (*q*) p. 379.

by the *Goſpel* for the Recovery of Mankind, which were not diſcoverable by the *Light* of *Nature*. Without inquiring at all, Whether they were *fit Means* to be uſed in order to promote the Reformation of Mankind, or not; he attacks them with this terrible *Dilemma*; Either, that GOD interpoſed *arbitrarily* and *unneceſſarily* in giving them, or elſe, that the *Law* of *Nature* was *defective*, which would argue a Defect of Wiſdom or Goodneſs in GOD. Now we anſwer, That the *Law of Nature* was not in any Point defective; that it was given to *preſerve* Men from all Corruption, which Purpoſe it would have ſerved, if they had duly attended to it; that their Corruptions were owing to their Neglect and Abuſe of *Means* given to prevent them; and from thence only aroſe the *Need* of other *extraordinary Means*, which the *Light* of *Nature* could not diſcover. Hence you may perceive, how *Natural* and *Revealed Religion* differ, without ſuppoſing the one to be *defective*, or the other *oppreſſed* with *arbitrary Impoſitions*: The one was intended to keep Men *from*

falling, the other to relieve them *in that fallen Eſtate.* And as it is ſeldom found, that the ſame Means will ſerve to *redreſs* an Evil, which would have *prevented* it; ſo it proved in this Caſe: And therefore we cannot conclude, that GOD interpoſed *arbitrarily* or *unneceſſarily*, becauſe He applied *other* Means for the Recovery of Men, than He gave at firſt to prevent their falling.

SHOULD a ſick Man wrangle with his Phyſician at this rate, for preſcribing different things for the *Recovery* of his Health, than he had formerly preſcribed for the *Preſervation* of it; or ſhould he ſay to him, "Away with "your *Drugs*, there is but one uni-"verſal Remedy for all ſick Perſons (*r*), "*Change of ill Habit of Body* and "*Amendment*," without conſidering what Means may be proper to promote *that Change*; his Diſtemper would be thought to have reached his Head. I will therefore argue this Point no farther, leſt I ſhould incur Cenſure for being tedious in a needleſs Caſe.

GENTLE-

(*r*) Pag. 49.

GENTLEMEN,

I WILL make no Apology for troubling You with this *Eſſay*. If it needs any, let it be this, That the candid friendly Treatment, I have met with, during my Acquaintance with You, has tempted me to take this Opportunity of acknowledging myſelf,

Your moſt obliged

Humble Servant,

North-Creak,
May 22. 1730.

THO. BULLOCK.

MATTH. XXI. 33, 34.

There was a certain Houſholder which planted a Vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a Wine-preſs in it, and built a Tower, and let it out to Husbandmen, and went into a far Country.

And when the Time of the Fruit drew near, he ſent his Servants to the Huſbandmen, that they might receive the Fruit of it.

OUR Bleſſed LORD, after many Cavils and Exceptions raiſed by the *Jews* againſt the Authority and Power, with which he taught, and wrought daily Miracles in their Sight; ſeeing their Obſtinacy and Infidelity to increaſe againſt every kind of Evidence, and all means of Conviction; endeavoured at laſt (by way of Parable) to inſinuate into their Minds a Senſe of their Ingratitude, and in the Perſons of other Men to paint to them

 their

their own Characters: That all Selfiſhneſs and Prejudice being laid aſide, they might be led inſenſibly to paſs an impartial Judgment upon their own Behaviour.

THIS was the Intent of the Parable now before us. Where GOD is repreſented under the Character of an *Houſholder*, planting a Vineyard, fencing and furniſhing it with all things neceſſary, and placing *Husbandmen* in it. A fit Repreſentation of his Conduct towards the Children of *Iſrael!* For after He had brought them out of the Land of *Egypt* and through the Wilderneſs, *by Signs and Wonders, with a mighty Hand and a ſtretched out Arm*, He placed them in a very pleaſant Land, and defended them from their Enemies round about: He alſo gave them his Statutes and Ordinances and Judgments, with an Aſſurance that, if they obſerved them, *they* ſhould be *his* People, and *He* would be *their* GOD. After ſuch peculiar Mercies ſhewed them, He could not but expect ſome Returns of Gratitude and Reſpect, Reverence and Obedience. But 'tis too notorious, that they quickly forgat his Works and would not abide his Counſels:

Iſa. v. 7. As he complains by his Prophet *Iſaiah*, *The Vineyard of the* LORD *of Hoſts is the Houſe of* Iſrael, *and the Men of* Judah *his pleaſant Plant: And he looked for Judgment but behold Oppreſſion, for Righteouſneſs, but behold a Cry.* GOD often aſſayed to check theſe Backſlidings of his People, ſending unto them his Servants the Prophets time after time,

time, to admoniſh them of the evil of their doings and to reclaim them: Notwithſtanding they would not hearken, nor be reclaimed; but *they killed his Prophets, and ſtoned them which were ſent unto them*, (as is obſerved of the *Husbandmen* in the Parable) and hardened themſelves againſt all means of Conviction.—*ſtill* God thought not fit to give them up to Ruin, till he had tried every poſſible means for their Recovery. And ſince all inferior Methods had proved ineffectual, He reſolved at laſt to bring their Condition to a Criſis, to try the utmoſt he could do; if that failed, to give them up for ever. *Laſt of all he ſent unto them his Son.* Ver. 37. A greater Meſſenger He could not ſend, nor one more likely to prevail with them; therefore after him no other was to be expected, no farther means to be tried upon them, as appears by the Sequel of the Parable, where they that rejected the Son are adjudged worthy of utter Deſtruction.

And this Repreſentation of the Caſe of the *Jews* is indeed but an Epitome of the State of Mankind from the Creation of the World, to the Coming of our Saviour; and the Parable will, without any Force put upon it, bear the Application. — By the *Houſholder*'s planting a Vineyard, hedging it about and ſupplying it with all Conveniencies, we may underſtand the great Work of God in creating the World, and furniſhing it with all Things neceſſary and convenient and delightful. His letting it out to

Husbandmen may ſignify, his creating Man upon the Face of the Earth, and giving him the Command and Uſe of it.—By the *Houſholder*'s going into a far Country, we cannot underſtand GOD's real Abſence from any Part of his Creation; for He is a Being of an immenſe Nature, every where preſent, who ſees and knows all the Actions of Men and underſtandeth all their Thoughts. He is therefore repreſented as one abſent from his Family, not becauſe of any local Diſtance from them, but becauſe He acts in ſome reſpects as one abſent from them. For Inſtance: A Man that is preſent in his Family takes immediate Cognizance of the Behaviour of his Servants, and without Delay reproves or encourages, rewards or puniſhes them, as he thinks they deſerve: But if he ſhould be abſent from his Family for any conſiderable Time, he cannot all that Time animadvert upon their Conduct, but muſt defer accounting with them till his Return. And in this Reſpect GOD uſually deals with Men, as a Maſter that is abſent from his Servants; He doth not immediately enter into Judgment with them; but ſuffers Men (generally ſpeaking) to go on in their own Ways, without making a conſtant viſible Difference between the righteous and the wicked; *becauſe he hath appointed a Day, when he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs, and render to every Man according to his Deeds.* Hence it is, that CHRIST's Coming to Judgment is ſeveral times in Scripture liken-

ed

ed to a Man returning to his Family after a long Abſence, and coming from a Journey to take Account of his Servants. And for the ſame reaſon GOD is repreſented in this Parable as one abſent from his Creatures. The *Houſholder*'s ſending Servants to require of the *Husbandmen* the Fruit of his Vineyard, naturally calls to Mind the early Degeneracy of Men, how ſoon they forgat the GOD that made them, and how apt to abuſe and miſinterpret his preſent Forbearance with them into an Occaſion of ſinning more ſecurely. As a wicked Servant who (in his Maſter's Abſence) ſays in his Heart, *My Lord delayeth his Coming*, and therefore encourages himſelf in all manner of Enormities. For this reaſon it ſeemed good to Almighty GOD to ſend his Servants the Prophets from time to time, to check and reſtrain the Licentiouſneſs of Men, to remind them of their Duty, and recall them to their Obedience. Thoſe firſt Servants that were ſent, mentioned, *ver.* 34. may well be applied to the Patriarchs before the Flood, who were appointed by GOD to oppoſe the Depravity of thoſe Times. And the Treatment they met with on that Occaſion will bear to be repreſented by the Uſage the *Houſholder's* Servants are ſaid to receive from the *Husbandmen*. Then thoſe other Servants, more in Number than the firſt, which are ſaid to be ſent, *ver.* 36, will anſwer to the Prophets employed by GOD under the *Jewiſh Oeconomy*: And that their Treatment was ſuch, as is deſcribed

deſcribed in the Parable, the Hiſtory of the *Old Teſtament* doth abundantly teſtify. Then follows the third and laſt remarkable Interpoſition of Providence, by the Mediation of the Son of GOD, which was unqueſtionably intended by thoſe Words of the Parable, *ver.* 37. *Laſt of all he ſent unto them his Son.* And according to the Repreſentation of the Parable was the Treatment he met with from the *jewiſh* Rulers: For obſerving the Inclination of the People to follow him, they were afraid leſt the *Romans*, offended at it, ſhould come and take away their Place and Nation, and therefore judged it expedient for the Preſervation of their Dignity to put him to Death; directly ſignified by the *Husbandmens* conſulting together againſt the *Houſholder's* Son, ſaying, *ver.* 38. *This is the Heir, come, let us kill him, and let us ſeize on his Inheritance.*

OUR Bleſſed LORD having thus by Parable repreſented the Uſage, which he the Son of GOD ſhould meet with, put this Queſtion to them, *When the Lord of the Vineyard cometh, what will he do unto thoſe Husbandmen?* The *Jews*, not immediately perceiving, that the Parable was ſpoken againſt them, anſwered impartially and ſaid, *He will miſerably deſtroy thoſe wicked Men, and will let out his Vineyard to other Husbandmen, who ſhall render him the Fruits in their Seaſon.* This latter Part of the Parable is ſomewhat differently related by St. *Luke*, who makes our Saviour to anſwer his own Queſtion, and the

the *Jews*, inſtead of paſſing ſuch a Sentence, to ſay, *God forbid*. To reconcile this Difference, it is to be obſerved, That St. *Luke* omits the firſt Anſwer given to the *Jews*, and relates only a Confirmation of it by our Bleſſed LORD: Upon which the *Jews*, perceiving the Parable was intended againſt them, would have retracted their former Sentence and ſaid, *God forbid*. This may ſerve to ſhow us the ill Effects of a Self-Partiality, which is ſo apt to corrupt the Judgment, and often hinders Men, otherwiſe capable of paſſing a true Judgment upon Vice and the ſeveral Aggravations of it, from perceiving the Iniquity of their own Behaviour. The *Jews*, when their Ingratitude and Perverſeneſs was laid before them in the Perſons of other Men, readily conceived a right Opinion of it, and could not but expreſs their Abhorrence and Deteſtation of it, and with great Indignation paſt a very ſevere Sentence upon the Perſons ſuppoſed to be guilty of ſuch a Conduct: But when our Saviour made the Application, and ſignified to them, that *they were the Men* intended by the *Husbandmen* in the Parable, they would fain have retracted their former Sentence, and began to judge that hard in their own Caſe, which they had adjudged to be reaſonable in the Caſe of other Men.

FROM the Parable thus explained, out of the many uſeful Obſervations and Reflexions that may be made upon it, I ſhall take particular Notice of theſe that follow.

I. WE

I. We may obſerve, what is the great fundamental Principle of all Religion, *viz.* Our neceſſary Dependence upon Almighty God, as Author and Diſpoſer of all things, ſignified to us under the Character of an *Houſholder planting a Vineyard and placing Husbandmen in it.*

II. We may obſerve from thence the Duties of natural Religion incumbent upon us from that Principle, ſignified in the Parable by the *Fruits of the Vineyard*, which the *Houſholder* expected to receive from his *Husbandmen.*

III. We may obſerve the true Intent of the ſeveral Revelations made by God to Mankind, ſignified to us in the Intention of the *Houſholder ſending Servants to the Huſbandmen, to demand the Fruits of his Vineyard.*

I. I shall take Notice of the great fundamental Principle of all Religion, *viz. Our neceſſary Dependance upon Almighty* God, *as Author and Diſpoſer of all things*, ſignified to us under the Character of an *Houſholder planting a Vineyard and placing Husbandmen in it.* The Reaſon of our Lord's introducing this Parable with an Account of what the Houſholder did to his Vineyard, before he put it into the Hands of Husbandmen, was plainly to ſhew the Obligation, which the Husbandmen

Husbandmen lay under, of ſatisfying the Demands of their Maſter. They became thereby *his* Dependents, they held it by *his* good Pleaſure; *he* had taken Care to furniſh it with all Conveniencies, and to make it every way fit for their Purpoſe: On theſe Conſiderations, (and not upon the Foot of mere Dominion, which in many Inſtances is ſeen to be acquired by Violence and Wrong) was founded their Obligation to make the Returns expected from them. As the Vineyard did of right belong to him, he muſt have ſome Concern in the Diſpoſal of the Fruits: As they held it by his Favour, they were evidently accountable to him in the Management of it. And as he had planted it, the *End* for which he did it, ought always to have been conſidered and regarded by them: They were obliged in Intereſt, Equity and Gratitude ſo to do. And every Obligation of this Kind will appear to lie much ſtronger upon us with Reſpect to GOD: Who created a World for our Uſe and Service, furniſhed it with all things neceſſary and convenient for the Support of human Life, and fitted it in every Reſpect to anſwer the Needs and Exigences of our Nature. Having provided a Place, thus fit, thus convenient for the Reception of the Gueſts intended, He afterwards created Man, and made him capable of reliſhing the Enjoyments and of finding Pleaſure in the Uſe of thoſe Things, which had been provided for him. In creating the World,

He had Regard to the Creatures, for whom it was intended, ſuiting every thing to their Capacities and Powers, their Tempers and Conſtitutions, their Affections and Neceſſities: And in making Man he had reſpect to the Proviſion that was made for him. He furniſhed the World with ſuch things, as were moſt proper for ſuch Beings as we are; and made us of ſuch a Frame and Nature, that we might receive Comfort and Refreſhment from them. Every way He ſhewed a Regard to our Good, both in our own and the World's Creation; laying us under the ſtricteſt Obligation therefore, in Point of Intereſt, Equity and Gratitude, to have Regard to his Will, and the Ends for which he made us, both in the Government of ourſelves, and in the Uſe of thoſe things he had provided for us.

And there is, that which adds to the Obligation ariſing from theſe Conſiderations, The generous diſintereſted Motive, which inclined the Divine Being to be thus gracious: It was not to inlarge his own Happineſs; but to communicate Happineſs to his Creatures; not that the Creature could add any thing to him, who is infinite in Perfection, but that other Beings might be made happy by him. This is a Conſideration, which no Similitude drawn from the Affairs of human Life can ſignify or repreſent to us. The *Houſholder* planted his Vineyard, not for the Sake of the *Husbandmen* only, but with a View alſo to his own Advantage:

But

But GOD created the World merely for our Uſe and Service; *He alone* was the Author, and *we alone* do reap the Benefit of it. If therefore the *Husbandmen* were obliged to make grateful Returns, and to acknowledge the Dependance they had upon the *Houſholder* in a ſuitable Manner; how much more are we obliged to GOD who needed us not, neither can be profited by us.

THE Conſideration of this Dependance we have on GOD for Life and Breath and every thing we enjoy, as it is the firſt and moſt obvious Principle that Nature leads us to, in reflecting upon the Divine Being, ſo is it the main and fundamental Principle upon which the religious Services we pay to him are founded. A Principle, which can hardly eſcape the Notice of the moſt ordinary Capacity; which needs not much Subtilty of Reaſoning to convince us of its Truth, nor much Acuteneſs of Judgment to find it out. For when we reflect upon ourſelves, we cannot but perceive, that we were not the Authors of our own Being, neither were the Faculties and Powers we have of our own Contrivance, nor the things we enjoy of our own Creating: And we are as certain, that Beings ſubject to ſo many Changes and Imperfections could not have exiſted neceſſarily, or by any Power inherent in themſelves; but muſt depend upon the effective Influence of ſome Cauſe without them. From whence we cannot but conclude, That there was a firſt Cauſe

of all things, which being eternal and neceſſarily exiſting was the Cauſe of all other things beſides. And this again immediately ſuggeſts to us the neceſſary Dependance we have upon him, and the utter Impoſſibility of our being at all, and much more of enjoying any thing without him. And this Principle of Religion, as it is plain and obvious, ſo is it ſtrong and forcible, and of itſelf ſufficient to demonſtrate to us the Equity and Reaſonableneſs of the great Duties of natural Religion; even without thoſe other Conſiderations, which may be added to encourage and enforce it. This we find plainly intimated in the Parable: For the only Reaſon ſuggeſted there, why the *Houſholder* ſhould expect from the *Husbandmen* the Fruits of the Vineyard, was, becauſe he had planted and furniſhed it, and put it into the Hands of thoſe *Husbandmen*. With much greater Reaſon therefore does GOD expect from us Homage and Reverence, Gratitude and Obedience; becauſe we have received from him, not only the things we enjoy, but ourſelves likewiſe, and the power of enjoying them. I ſhall proceed therefore to conſider,

II. THE Duties of Natural Religion incumbent upon us from this Principle; ſignified in the Parable by the *Fruits of the Vineyard*, which the *Houſholder* expected to receive from the *Husbandmen*. And here I need not take the Pains to obſerve the ſeveral

veral Obligations incumbent upon the *Huſbandmen* from their Dependance upon the *Houſholder* any farther, than as it may ſerve to illuſtrate the Reaſonableneſs of thoſe Obligations incumbent upon us from our Dependance upon GOD.

AND from the Dependance we have on GOD, it muſt be allowed, That we ought to acknowledge that Dependance, be it what it will; and that we ought not to aſſume to ourſelves, or impute to any other Cauſe, what is wholly owing to him alone. And ſince we depend entirely upon him for every thing, it will follow, That we can have no ſure Confidence in our own Schemes or in any the inferior Helps, which this World affords; but that all our Hopes and Expectations ſhould ultimately centre in Him who alone can give, or with-hold, as he pleaſes, and on whoſe ſole Will the Succeſs or Diſappointment of every Councel or Deſign does neceſſarily depend. We are obliged therefore in all our Needs and Exigences to look up to Him uſing the ſeveral Powers and Faculties he has given us, as the Inſtruments of his gracious Will, and ſubmitting the Event of every thing to Him, who knows upon the whole what is beſt and moſt convenient.

IT is alſo highly reaſonable, That we endeavour at all times to act ſuitably to ſuch Dependance, reflecting frequently with Gratitude upon his Goodneſs in the wiſe Diſpoſal of us and all our Concerns, thankfully

praiſing

praiſing him for thoſe Bleſſings and Benefits we daily receive from his bountiful Hand, for our Being and Subſiſtence, for the Powers and Faculties both of Body and Mind, for all the Neceſſaries and Conveniencies of Life, and for every thing we enjoy; and that we give the Honour thereof to him alone, becauſe He alone was the Author and Giver of them.

It is farther reaſonable and neceſſary, as we owe our Beings, our Powers and Faculties to him, That we ſhould employ them in ſuch a Manner, as upon the beſt Notices we can get, appears moſt agreeable to his Will, tending to the Manifeſtation of his Glory, and to ſerve thoſe Ends for which he deſigned them: And there is no more Reaſon to juſtify us in employing them otherwiſe, than there is for a Servant to employ thoſe Goods his Maſter has entruſted him with for his own Uſe and Service, to any other fooliſh or wicked End, which his own Fancy may ſuggeſt, or his extravagant Deſires lead him to.

That God, in making us rational Creatures, and giving us Faculties far more excellent, than what he has beſtowed upon the Brutes which have no Underſtanding, did therein deſign us for greater and more worthy Ends than they, is evident and unqueſtionable. To give ourſelves up therefore to brutiſh ſenſual Pleaſures, and to employ thoſe better Faculties he has bleſt us with, in the Service, and for the Gratification

tion of our Senſes only, (which the Brutes enjoy in common with us) is a direct Contradiction to that Deſign, and muſt be very diſpleaſing to the Author and Giver of them.

The Mind of Man is certainly a very excellent Production, which is beſt conceived by conſidering the many excellent Purpoſes capable of being promoted by it. To cultivate and improve it therefore, and to apply it carefully to every good Purpoſe, as far as we are able, as this ſerves to diſcover more manifeſtly the Excellency of the Production, it muſt of Conſequence tend to the greater Manifeſtation of his Glory, who was the Author of it. It will therefore follow on the other hand, That if we cloud and weaken it by Intemperance, if we deface and ſully it by Extravagance, we do thereby diſhonour its Author, and contradict the Deſign of Him who gave it.

The Capacity God has given us of diſtinguiſhing between Good and Evil, of diſcerning what is ſuitable to our Nature, to the Station we are placed in, to the Relation we bear to others, was certainly given us with Deſign that we ſhould apply it to ſuch Purpoſes: And he that gives a thing for a certain End, gives it in Expectation of ſeeing that End promoted by it. Is it not therefore acting ungratefully towards our great Benefactor, and unſuitably to the Dependance we have upon him, if we miſapply it, or wilfully diſobey the Dictates of

of it? If an *Houſholder* plant his Vineyard with the choiceſt Vines, and his *Labourers* neglect to prune and cultivate them; if he furniſh them with proper Inſtruments of Huſbandry, and they either make no Uſe of them, or elſe employ them to dig up and deſtroy his Vineyard; they act more like Enemies than Dependents, or as *Lords* in their own, and not like *Labourers* in another's Vineyard. After the ſame Manner do Men act towards their great Creator, when they neglect or miſimploy thoſe excellent Faculties he has given them, when they give themſelves up to Senſuality and Pleaſure, without Regard to Reaſon or the Dictates of it, when they uſe their Wit and Parts to oppoſe Truth, or pervert Judgment, to defraud or deceive their Neighbour, or any Advantage they have over another, to injure or abuſe him; ſuch Uſe of our Faculties is evidently contrary to the Deſign of the Giver; and if there be any Foundation for the Notions we have of his Wiſdom, Juſtice and Goodneſs, it cannot but be highly diſpleaſing to him.

THE *Paſſions*, which GOD has planted in our Nature, ſuch as *Deſire* and *Averſion*, *Hope* and *Fear* with the like, ſo long as they are regulated and directed by our Reaſon, and by due Attention fixed upon proper Objects, are found to be of great Service to quicken our Diligence and Application to that which is good, and

to

to reſtrain us from that which is evil: But if they are let looſe and wantonly indulged without Reaſon or Prudence to guide them, they break out into many Extravagances, and produce Effects prejudicial to our Nature and diſhonourable to God. He therefore that indulges his Paſſions in contradiction to his Reaſon, is like the *Husbandman*, who having a plentiful Supply of Water to refreſh his Vineyard at proper Seaſons, breaks down the Banks and tears up the Sluices, and thereby lets in a Torrent of Water to deſtroy it and render it unprofitable.

UPON the whole we may obſerve, That, as it is more for the Honour of God, and more agreeable to the Deſign of a wiſe and good Being, to employ our ſeveral Faculties and Talents to ſome uſeful and good Purpoſe, our Reaſon to diſcover, by what Means we may beſt improve ourſelves, or be moſt beneficial to others, our Faculty of Speech to counſel and adviſe, rather than to deceive our Neighbour, our worldly Goods and Advantages to aſſiſt and relieve them that are in Neceſſity, rather than to conſume them in Vanity or Intemperance, or Exceſs: I ſay, As this Uſe of them tends to manifeſt the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God in the Conſtitution of human Nature, it evidently follows from that entire Dependance we have upon him, that we are obliged ſo to uſe them, and that if we do not, we involve ourſelves in the ſame Guilt with

the *Husbandmen* in the Parable, who refuſed their Lord the Fruits of his Vineyard. For *we are* (to ſpeak in the Words of the Prophet *Iſaiah*) *the Vineyard of the Lord of Hoſts*; thoſe Faculties of Body and Mind, and outward Advantages of Life, which he gave us, are the Conveniencies he has furniſhed it with; and the only Fruit we can render to Him, or He receive from us, is to uſe them in ſuch a Manner, as will moſt redound to his Honour and Glory. This is the leaſt that even common Gratitude can require of us; we can hardly think of the Benefits we have received from him without being ſenſible of this Obligation; and to deny, that thus much is due to him, is in effect to deny him to be the Author of our Being.

And though this Principle of our Dependance upon God for Life and Breath and every thing we enjoy, has been found in Fact too weak to incline Men to a right Uſe of the ſeveral Powers and Faculties and Advantages, which God has given them: (whether for want of well Conſidering it, or of due Attention to the plain neceſſary Conſequences which flow from it, or elſe thro' the Oppoſition of violent Luſts and Paſſions and vicious Habits long indulged) yet to unprejudiced Reaſon it cannot but appear of ſufficient Force to convince us of the *Obligation*, though uncapable of itſelf to keep us in the *Practice* of natural and moral Duties.

I can-

I CANNOT but think therefore, that it would be of great Uſe and Service, though not entirely to depend upon; yet frequently to have Recourſe to this Principle, and to give it a place in our Thoughts, amongſt the other Arguments and Motives we have to Practical Religion. It would ſerve to convince us, that the Duties of it are of an unalterable Nature, ſuch as will always oblige us, as long as we are Creatures; and Creatures we muſt always acknowledge ourſelves to be, ſubſiſting by the mere good Pleaſure of our great Creator. And in this View, thoſe Duties cannot be looked upon as the rigid Impoſitions of a hard or tyrannical Maſter, ſince they ſpring as it were out of our very Being: For as it was impoſſible we ſhould be at all without being dependent; ſo is it impoſſible we ſhould be free from thoſe Duties and Obligations, which naturally flow from Dependency itſelf. This alſo will convince us, That no true Religion, no Revelation having God for its Author, can be ſuppoſed to be diſpenſed with, or diſannul the fundamental Laws of our Nature, the Laws of Equity and Humanity, which are neceſſarily interwoven with our very Being and the Conditions of it. In Confirmation whereof I ſhall proceed

III. To conſider the true Intent of the ſeveral Revelations made by GOD to Mankind, ſignified to us in the Intention of the

Houſholder, ſending Servants to the Husbandmen, to demand the Fruits of his Vineyard. The *Houſholder* ſent his Servants to the *Huſbandmen*, not to make any new Demands, nor arbitrarily to increaſe their Burden with new Impoſitions; but to require a Performance of thoſe Terms, they were originally obliged to, upon their firſt Admiſſion into his Vineyard. Upon their Neglect hereof, he ſent his Meſſengers to put them in mind of their Duty, and to require a Performance of it. Upon their ill Succeſs, he ſent other Servants more than the firſt; and upon the ſame Occaſion he thought fit at laſt to ſend his Son.

EXACTLY parallel was the Caſe of Mankind, and the Occaſion of the ſeveral Interpoſitions of GOD by his Servants the Prophets. At firſt he left Men to the Guidance of natural Light, by a due Uſe of their Reaſon to diſcover what beſt became the Station they were placed in, and what Duties were incumbent upon them in the Relation they ſtood to GOD, as their Creator, and to one another, as their Fellow-Creatures, of the ſame Frame and Conſtitution; expecting no Service from them, but what their own Reaſon would ſuggeſt, and the very Nature and Circumſtances of their Being, well conſidered, would have recommended to them, *(i. e.)* With all Humility and Gratitude to have acknowledged their Dependance upon the GOD that made them, To have treated one another, as partaking

ing of the ſame Nature, with Equity and Humanity, and with Attention, Sobriety, and a due Regulation of their Paſſions, to have kept themſelves in a Capacity of doing what beſt became their Station and Circumſtances. Not till Men had greatly failed in theſe Reſpects, did GOD interpoſe by his Servants the Prophets, whoſe chief Imployment it was, To teſtify againſt the Iniquities and Corruptions of Men, to renew in them a Senſe of their Creator, whom they had neglected, and with farther Arguments and Motives to awaken their Attention to thoſe Duties, which Reaſon itſelf had recommended to them. This was the Subſtance of *Enoch*'s Prophecy, as appears by the Account given of it by St. *Jude*; and that of *Noah* was to the ſame Effect, for which Reaſon he is called by St. *Peter*, *a Preacher of Righteouſneſs*. Ver. 14, 15. 2 Pet. ii. 5.

BUT as theſe Admonitions of the Patriarchs had not the deſired Effect, nor yet that dreadful Deluge, which GOD brought upon the World of the Ungodly: He afterwards attempted by a new Inſtitution of Religion to ratify and confirm the immutable Laws of Nature and Reaſon, writing them on Tables of Stone, which before were wrote upon the *fleſhly Tables of the Heart*. He added indeed at that time divers other Laws and Ordinances, not for the Sake of the Laws themſelves, nor yet to burden his People: but as *Means* to prevent the idolatrous Diſpoſition of thoſe Times, and the many groſs

groſs Corruptions in Morality uſually conſequent thereupon. For it is to be obſerved, That when his People paid greater Regard to theſe Ordinances, than to the natural Obligations of Piety and Humanity, He ſeverely reproved them for it, telling them, *I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice.* And the Prophet *Micah* plainly ſignified that GOD had no Regard to thoſe Ordinances for their own Sake, when he expoſtulated with them in this manner: *What doth the* LORD *require of thee, but to do Juſtice, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy* GOD?

BUT this was yet more clearly manifeſted by the Appearance of the SON of GOD, who made it his chief Buſineſs to encourage, and to promote the Practice of, all moral Duties; to clear them from the groſs Interpretations, which Men had put upon them, (as we may obſerve from the vth Chapter of St. *Matthew*) to give them a Pattern thereof in his Life and Converſation, to enforce the Practice of them by a clear and more certain Diſcovery of a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments; and by ſeveral other Helps, Advantages and Encouragements offered to keep them ſteady in the Obſervance of them.

WE ſee therefore, That under all the various Diſpenſations of Providence, the *ſame Fruits* were ſtill expected, even *our Obedience to the eternal and immutable Laws of Nature and Reaſon.* It is not therefore

a little ſurprizing to ſee Men, that pretend the greateſt Zeal for Revealed Religion, not only deſtitute of theſe Fruits, but oft-times making wilful Havock of them for the Sake, and in the Service (as they pretend) of a Religion revealed by GOD. But where do they find the Laws of Equity and Humanity diſpenſed with, upon any the moſt ſpecious Pretence whatſoever? What Part of Scripture is it, that allows Envy and Strife and Bitterneſs in the moſt ſtrenuous Contender for the Chriſtian Faith? Both under the *Law* and under the *Goſpel*, we may obſerve the greateſt Care imaginable taken of the Duties of Morality and a good Life. They are preſs'd, and repeated, and inculcated with ſuch Earneſtneſs and Variety of Argument and Expreſſion, that the *ſacred Writers* muſt intend they ſhould be ever uppermoſt in our Thoughts. We are told, that CHRIST's coming in the Fleſh, was *to deſtroy Sin in the Fleſh*; that He continued upon Earth, to be an *Example* to us of a Holy and Virtuous Life; that *He ſuffered to redeem us from all Iniquity, and to purchaſe to himſelf a peculiar People zealous of good Works*; that He ſent his Holy Spirit with this Intent, *that we through the Spirit might mortify the Deeds of the Body*, and *bring forth the Fruits thereof in all Goodneſs, and Righteouſneſs, and Truth.*

HERE then is *true* Religion, confirmed by the concurrent Teſtimony of all the Prophets and Meſſengers of GOD from the Foundation

Foundation of the World: Here is *ancient* Religion, eſtabliſhed with the World, and that will not *end* with it: Religion of that Weight and Importance, that GOD was pleaſed at ſundry Times, and in divers miraculous manners to interpoſe on its Behalf, and at laſt to confirm it by the Mediation of his SON, whoſe *Goſpel*, which is *the Grace of God bringing Salvation, teacheth us, that denying Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World.* The old *Foundation* therefore, (as St. *Paul* obſerves) *ſtill ſtandeth ſure; having this Seal* of Confirmation given to it by the Goſpel, LET EVERY ONE THAT NAMETH THE NAME OF CHRIST DEPART FROM INIQUITY.

FINIS.